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Bartley, freshman pitcher

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B A R T L E Y
FRESHMAN PITCHER

By WILLIAM HEYLIGER

BACKFIELD COMET
THE SILVER RUN
RITCHIE OF THE NEWS
THE GALLANT CROSBY
JOHNNY BREE
THE BUILDER OF THE DAM
THE MACKLIN BROTHERS
THE MAKING OF PETER CRAY
THE FIGHTING CAPTAIN
DORSET'S TWISTER
QUINBY AND SON
THE SPIRIT OF THE LEADER
DAN'S TOMORROW
HIGH BENTON
HIGH BENTON—WORKER

Fairview Series

CAPTAIN FAIR AND SQUARE
THE COUNTY PENNANT
FIGHTING FOR FAIRVIEW

St. Mary's Series

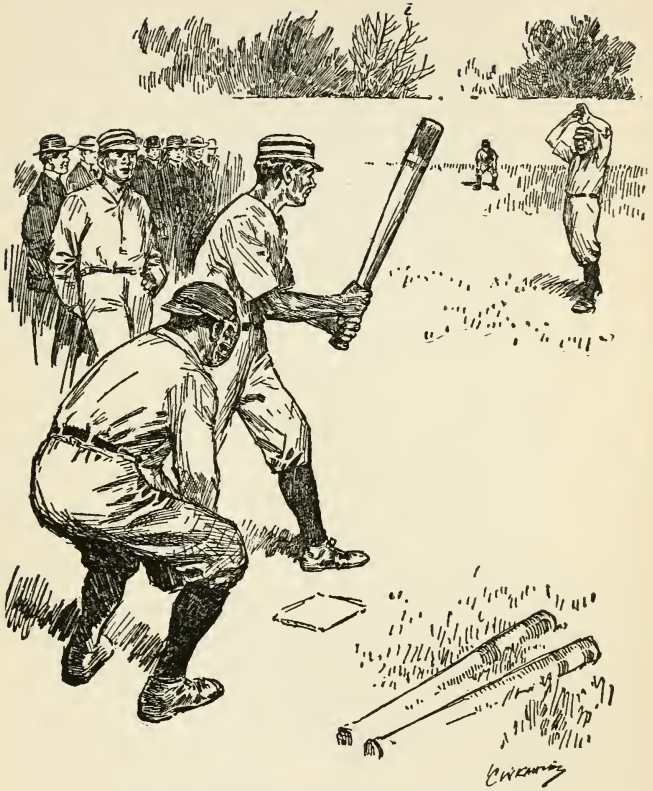
BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER
STRIKE THREE!
THE CAPTAIN OF THE NINE
AGAINST ODDS
OFF SIDE

Boy Scouts Series

DON STRONG OF THE WOLF PATROL
DON STRONG, PATROL LEADER
DON STRONG, AMERICAN

Lansing Series

BATTER UP STRAIGHT AHEAD
FAIR PLAY



“Redway was at the plate, waiting quietly.”
[Page 41]

BARTLEY

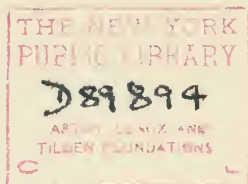
FRESHMAN PITCHER

BY
WILLIAM HEYLIGER



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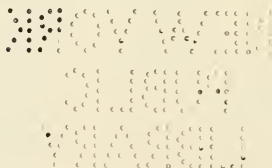


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Printed in the United States of America

TO
THE CLEAR-EYED, ROBUST BOYS
WHO FIND A CONSTANTLY INCREASING JOY
IN THE KING OF SPORTS
BASEBALL

NEW YORK
PUBLISHED
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THE
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BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

CHAPTER I

THE MEETING

AS the train came to a standstill at the station, Edward Kennedy lowered himself to the platform. Thirty or more boys piled from the cars almost at his heels. All that day every train had let off a flock of boys at the little college town.

Kennedy squared his shoulders and strode up the street that led to the college campus. His face bore an expectant look. What he had been hoping for came as he approached the campus fence, where the students were gathered thickly.

“O you Lightning!”

“How’s that arm?”

“Can we beat Rockton?”

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"I guess we can."

"You're getting fat, Lightning."

Kennedy smiled serenely. He felt that considering he would be St. Mary's winning pitcher this little demonstration was only his due.

"My arm's in great shape," he announced cheerfully. "Played ball all summer. How do the freshmen size up?"

"Pretty poor lot," sighed a sophomore. "One likely-looking fellow among them, though. He comes from your town, too, Lightning."

"What's his name?" asked Kennedy.

"Who remembers a freshman's name," scoffed the sophomore, and Kennedy went off and found his room in Winslow Hall. True, who remembered a freshman's name? Wasn't he given scant notice last year because Turner was the star pitcher? But now Turner was out of college, and he was expected to take Turner's place. He felt the muscles in his pitching arm and smiled confidently.

"Wonder who's here from Warwick," he mused. "I didn't know that anybody from home was coming here."

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He fell to unpacking the trunk that had arrived the day before. After a while he stopped to mop his brow.

“Well,” he said, “whoever it is can go back and tell the town that Kennedy is St. Mary’s star pitcher.”

The little college town was lively that night. The boys would not settle down to their studies for several days yet; and while the freshmen, strange, awed, kept to themselves, the students who had put in a year or more at St. Mary’s circulated about the campus, or through the halls and rooms of Winslow Hall, the giant college dormitory.

After a time, as though by instinct, the boys that had made up the St. Mary’s nine of last season flocked to Kennedy’s room. Charles Redway, the captain and the catcher of the nine, gave the pitcher a whole-souled greeting. They spoke of last season’s battles—of how Kaufman, at first base, had saved the Marshall game with a bare-handed flying catch; of how Redway had driven the ball to the fence to the despair of the Orion rooters. Nobody spoke of how

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Turner had weakened in the ninth inning of the Rockton game, and had allowed Rockton to score the winning runs. Kennedy would have been just as well pleased had they told the story.

Before long Jenkins, the coach, poked his head into the room.

"Hello, fellows," he called cheerily. He nodded to Kennedy. "How's your arm, Lightning?"

"Fine," answered the boy.

"Think you can clean up everything in sight?"

"I guess so. I've developed a fine slow ball. Took me all summer to get it."

"Good!" said the coach. "All you needed last season was a change of pace. That was the secret of Turner's success."

Kennedy frowned. Turner again. Would he never hear the end of Turner?

"He'll come down for a while and help coach the pitchers," said Jenkins.

"I'll take no orders from Turner this year," muttered Kennedy in an undertone that did

THE MEETING

not reach the coach. "He's a back number now."

The annual cane rush at St. Mary's took place the second week of the college year, and in the days that followed the sophomores took to studying the freshmen they were soon to meet.

None studied the first-year boys with greater eagerness than Kennedy. While pretending to judge of the physical qualities that they might possess, the pitcher was secretly searching for the student from Warwick. He did not find a familiar home face among the crowds of boys that he met. When he passed the freshmen they nudged one another and pointed him out. Would the Warwick boy do that? Would he send home enthusiastic letters telling what a big man one Kennedy was in this little college world? Kennedy hoped he would.

"It will stop that High School talk," he said savagely.

At the college office the sophomore could have seen the names of the boys of the new class, but he felt that a second-year boy, and a star pitcher, besides, could not lower himself to the

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level of looking up a freshman. If there was another Warwick boy in college, that boy would have to come to him.

It seemed to Kennedy that there was something queer about the situation. Surely the Warwick boy must have heard of him before this. When everybody was talking of wiping out last season's Rockton defeat, who could be in college two days without hearing of Kennedy? Why did the freshman, whoever he was, remain so steadfastly aloof?

"I wonder who it can be," muttered Kennedy, over and over again.

The day of the cane rush the sophomores held a council of war on the marble steps of Winslow Hall.

"Bottle up the big fellows," ordered Kennedy. "The rest should be easy."

At one end of the campus that same day the freshmen, unknown to each other, lacking leadership, huddled together like sheep and tried to plan for the honor of the class. Many of the boys were plainly nervous. A dozen suggestions were rapidly offered, and were as

THE MEETING

quickly rejected. There was hesitating silence after that until a voice called:

“Bartley! Let Bartley talk. What do you say, Bartley?”

A boy who had remained silent during the earlier talk spoke quietly:

“The big, strong sophomores are the boys to fear most. Go right after them. While they are kept busy the rest of our fellows can go after the cane.”

“Good!” chorused a dozen voices. “That’s the stuff, Bartley. That’s the talk.”

Early that evening, with the junior and senior classes lined up hopefully to watch the fun, the annual cane rush started. The boys had wisely gone into the rush with the worst clothes their wardrobes contained. In the heat of the strife coats were torn, collar bands were ripped off, and shirts were hopelessly pulled apart.

The upper classmen howled with glee. It was one of the best class battles the campus had boasted in years. While they watched they shouted with unbiased enthusiasm:

“Go it, freshies! Go it, sophs!”

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Slowly the biggest boys of the contesting classes came together in single strife. Soon a dozen isolated scrimmages were in progress a little apart from where the great mass of boys struggled heroically to get their hands on the coveted cane.

Off to one side two boys of equal weight and strength finally came together. It seemed that they had been trying to single each other out since the start of the rush. Each boy sought to get into the main struggle, and to keep the other boy out of it. They tugged and strained, and grunted and panted. Suddenly, as they broke and parted, one boy, wearing the white arm sash that distinguished the sophomores, faltered for an instant.

“Bartley!” he gasped. “You here?”

“Hello, Kennedy. I didn’t recognize you in the excitement.”

Their eyes met. Bartley’s gaze was frank and open. The star pitcher’s mouth twitched nervously.

“What brought you to St. Mary’s?” Kennedy demanded.



“Curt, why do they call Kennedy “Lightning”?”

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"I came to study, I suppose."

"And play baseball?"

"Yes. Why?"

Kennedy's eyes blazed. Before he could reply a swirl of the now rapidly ending rush pried them apart. They did not meet again that night.

"So that's the Warwick boy," grunted Kennedy bitterly. "Am I to have that High School experience all over again?"

Hours later, when the victorious freshmen ceased their cheering parade through the streets of the little college town, Bartley, and his roommate, Curtis, climbed the stairs to their quarters in the left wing of Winslow Hall.

There was a puzzled look in Bartley's eyes as he sank into a chair beside the study table. Curtis lived not many miles from this college town. Perhaps he might know something of St. Mary's tradition.

"Curt," the boy asked at last, "why do they call Kennedy 'Lightning'?"

"Ever see him pitch a game?" asked Curtis.

"Yes."

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“Then you’ll understand. He gets that name from the rapid way he winds up and delivers the ball.”

“That’s funny,” said Bartley; “he must have changed his style. When he was pitching for Warwick High——”

The freshman stopped suddenly. Curtis waited for him to continue, but Bartley said nothing more. After a while he murmured drowsily:

“I’m sleepy, Curt. Guess I’ll turn in.”

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH BARTLEY SHOWS FORM

ONE day, while the snow was still on the frozen ground, a notice was posted on the campus bulletin board. It was the call for the baseball candidates to assemble for practice in the cage, and it was signed by Jenkins, the coach, and by Redway, the captain of the nine.

There was a time when only the largest colleges boasted a baseball cage. Now almost every college has this requisite for early spring indoor training.

Bartley read the notice late that afternoon. He swung across the campus with the blood running warmly in his veins. When he entered his room Curtis was industriously ransacking the room's only closet.

"Lost anything?" asked Bartley.

"No," said Curtis, and went on searching. "Ah! I have it." He came up with an in-

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fielder's glove. "Thought I had left this home. There's nothing like the glove that is well-broken in and just fitted to your hand. See the notice?"

"Yes."

"I'm out for third base. Going to try for the nine?"

Bartley nodded.

"What position?"

"Pitcher."

"You never said you could pitch," Curtis uttered in surprise.

"You never asked me," mocked Bartley.

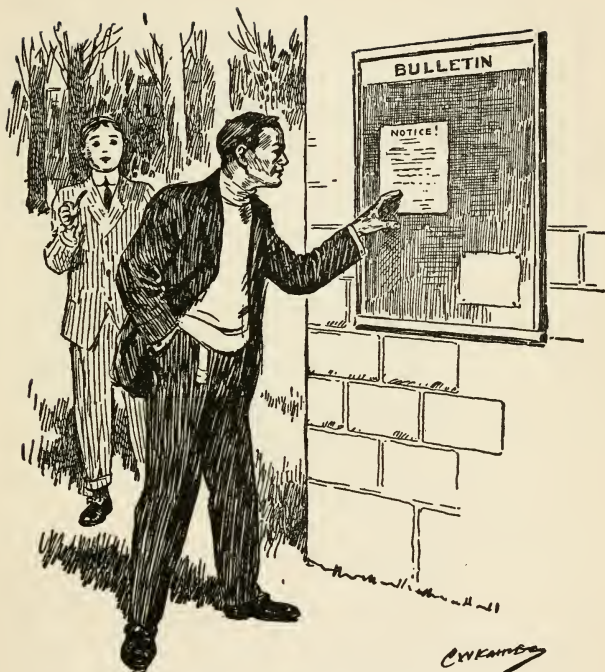
Curtis scowled and fell to pounding his glove. Bartley noticed the change.

"What's wrong, Curt?"

"You've got a hard job ahead of you, Dick. Kennedy's a— You know Kennedy—the one they call 'Lightning'?"

"Yes," said Bartley; "go on."

"This Kennedy's a star—at least, he'll be a star this year. Last spring he was Turner's understudy. They say that he developed a great slow ball during his summer vacation,



"Bartley read the notice late that afternoon."

BARTLEY SHOWS FORM

and that now he's almost as good as Turner, if not quite as good."

Bartley puckered his lips thoughtfully.

"Oh, don't get discouraged," added Curtis hastily. "Of course, if you show up well you'll get a chance to pitch some of the minor games. You can never tell what's going to happen in baseball. You might even get a chance to work in the Rockton game. Where did you pitch?"

"Warwick High School."

Curtis looked up quickly. "Didn't I hear you say Kennedy pitched for Warwick?"

"Yes."

"Then you knew him before you came here?"

"Yes."

There was something about the shortness of the answers that seemed to tell Curtis that Bartley did not want to be further questioned. Then Curtis remembered how his room-mate had suddenly ceased talking on a similar subject the night of the cane rush.

The boy slowly manipulated the well-worn glove to work out the winter's stiffness, and wondered the while at Bartley's desire to tell

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nothing of Kennedy while the star pitched for Warwick High.

“It can’t be jealousy,” Curtis thought; “he’s far too decent a fellow for that.”

Wednesday afternoon a squad of forty eager boys trailed into the baseball cage in the gymnasium. As they came they were lined up in single file and marched past the coach and the captain, who took their names and the positions they expected to fill.

Bartley and Curtis came in together. Bartley noticed Kennedy standing beside the coach. The freshman, however, was talking earnestly to Curtis and did not see the shadow that fell across the star pitcher’s face.

At last Bartley came to where Jenkins and Redway stood with ready pencils. The freshman gave his name.

“What position?” asked the coach.

“Pitcher.”

Redway, as a catcher, was interested in pitchers. “Where did you play, Bartley?”

“Warwick High School.”

“How long?”

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“Three years.”

“What was your record last year?” asked the catcher.

“Eight victories and two defeats,” said Bartley.

Curtis, standing behind his room-mate, whistled softly. “That’s some pitching,” he murmured.

“I suppose the infield went to pieces on the occasion of those two defeats?” asked the coach, as though this excuse had been offered before.

“No,” said Bartley; “I was hit pretty hard.”

After the freshman had moved away, and while Curtis still waited to register for the squad, Jenkins, the coach, turned to Kennedy.

“You pitched for Warwick, Lightning?”

Kennedy nodded.

“While he was there?”

Another nod.

“How is he?” asked the coach.

Curtis was listening intently. He noticed that the star pitcher hesitated.

“Pretty fair,” said Kennedy at last. “They

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say, though, that—that the graduate coach gave him all the best of it. His cousin, you know.”

Jenkins frowned. He did not like this reflection on the High School coach. He was a coach himself.

“Well,” he said, “you were there. Never mind what ‘they say.’ Did he get the best of it, or did he go through on his merits?”

Kennedy saw that he had made a mistake. “He went through on his merits, I guess,” he admitted hastily.

Curtis gave his name, and moved away thoughtfully. “There’s something behind all this,” he told himself, “and Kennedy has the wrong end.”

For a week thereafter the baseball candidates got only the lightest kind of exercise. The coach knew by experience that the boys must be held in, for too much work at the start would mean stiffened muscles. Sometimes muscles that stiffen in the spring are never quite right during any part of the following season, and that is a severe handicap. So for the first week the candidates were confined to throwing, catch-

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ing, and a little batting against balls that were just thrown up to the plate.

After that the pitching candidates, with their pitching muscles loosened, were brought in to serve easy balls to the boys at bat, and the infield and the outfield began its first real practice. Curtis, playing with the infielders, had three bad afternoons with the coach.

“Say,” he told Bartley, “I never realized how little I knew about baseball.”

Bartley went to the cage every day. Kennedy, on the other hand, missed about two days each week. The star pitcher, having gone through the training routine the year before, felt that he knew all the ropes, knew how to take care of himself and get into condition, and that he could afford to miss a day now and then.

On those occasions when Kennedy and Bartley met they spoke civilly to each other, but that was all. Bartley felt no anger toward the boy he had known at Warwick High. He would gladly have gone to Kennedy's room now and then with others of the baseball squad were it

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not that he felt instinctively that Kennedy did not want him there. He did not try to break through the star pitcher's barrier of cool reserve.

"He's still sore about that High School incident," thought the freshman.

Those students that join every athletic squad as it is formed, and then drop out in a week or two under stress of sore, stiffened muscles, had before this deserted the cage. As a result, Jenkins and Redway now had fewer boys to handle, and soon the aimless practice was abandoned.

The infielders took possession of the diamond, the outfielders drifted as far back as the cage would comfortably permit—it was not as large as the cages of the Eastern colleges—and the pitchers were ordered off to the left of the diamond for their workouts. With this last squad—a small squad, too—went Bartley.

Redway was vitally interested in his pitchers. Kennedy was the only boy left of the pitchers that St. Mary's had proudly claimed the season before. The catcher believed that Kennedy

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would take Turner's place and would pitch practically all the big games, but he knew he had to find a boy or two clever enough to twirl the games with the smaller schools. So a few days after the pitching squad had gone into real action, with Murray, the substitute catcher of last year, as backstop, Redway came over to survey his heavy artillery.

"Do I get a rest?" asked Murray, holding up his right hand to show where the flesh was red and puffed from the "fast ones."

"Yes," said Redway; "I'll handle them to-day. I want to see what they have."

Aside from Kennedy, there were four other pitching candidates—for even a college star is theoretically a candidate during the preliminary work in the cage. Redway, from experience and from what Jenkins had told him, knew that now and then star pitchers have bad years. Nevertheless, he gave most of his attention to the four new men. They were untried.

Three of them almost threw their arms out in an endeavor to show the captain of the nine that they were of the stuff of which pitchers are

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made. The fourth boy confined himself to fast, straight balls. For the most part the ball plunked into the catcher's big mitt wherever Redway held it.

"Good control," commented the captain.

After a while, though, the deliberate calmness of the pitcher stirred up in him a wave of dissension. What was that pitcher so cock-sure about?

"Say, you freshie, what's your name? Bartley?" asked Redway.

"Bartley," said the pitcher.

"Well, put something on the ball. Anybody can throw a straight, fast ball. You haven't shown me anything yet."

Kennedy's face lighted for a moment in a fleeting smile. In an effort to hide it he bent down and fumbled with the laces of his baseball shoes.

Bartley silently obeyed instructions. The next four balls he pitched broke in sharp, jumping, exasperating curves. Redway, expecting nothing like this, almost allowed the first two balls to get away from him. His eyes opened

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in unexpressed admiration. Then the freshman calmly switched to straight, fast balls again, and threw them in so that they did not tax his strength.

“Afraid of your arm?” asked Redway with a smile.

Bartley smiled, too. “I’m taking pretty good care of it. I strained it one spring.”

“Common sense in that freshman,” said Redway, half aloud.

“And the makings of a grand pitcher,” said Murray, who had stayed near Redway.

“I’ll watch him,” said the captain.

After the practice he called Kennedy off to one side.

“That freshman, Bartley, should develop,” he said. “Teach him a few things, will you, Ned?”

The star pitcher nodded and walked away.

Next day in the cage he came to Bartley after the freshman had left the locker room.

“Redway was speaking to me about you,” he said.

“Well?” demanded Bartley.

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"He wants me to teach you to pitch," Kennedy sneered.

The blood mounted to Bartley's cheeks. He felt that Kennedy was deliberately insulting him under the power given by the captain of the nine. A hot reply trembled on his lips; he smothered it with an effort. After all, Redway was captain, and had the interest of the nine at heart. He knew the game, else the nine would not have elected him. The freshman felt that he was only a candidate, and that as a candidate he should obey orders.

"All right," he said quietly. "Want to start now?"

"Now," said Kennedy sourly.

Kennedy was disappointed. He had reasoned that Bartley would show a flash of temper, and that he could then take the matter to the coach as a case of insubordination. He knew from experience the summary way that Jenkins dealt with boys who did not obey orders that came from either captain or coach.

Listlessly the star pitcher took the freshman to one side. Murray went with them and took



“ Kennedy weakly explained things that Bartley already knew.”

the balls they threw. Kennedy weakly explained things that he felt in his heart Bartley already knew. Yet the freshman listened with studious care to Kennedy's explanations, and patiently did just as Kennedy directed.

It was slow, tiresome work. Even Murray was moved to protest.

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“What is this,” he demanded; “a funeral?”

In half an hour the farce came to an end. Murray, indignant at so much wasted time, stalked away without a word. To the two pitchers it was the most unpleasant half hour that either had ever lived.

Thus far the pitchers had only been tossing the ball up to the batters. Now the coach started his candidates at their first real batting practice, figuring that by this time their eyes had gotten rid of the winter's film. For several days Kennedy, Bartley, and the other three pitchers served up fast, straight balls to the batters. At the end of those few days Jenkins decided that the candidates had their “eyes on the ball.” Then, too, the batteries had perfected their signals. The coach announced that next day the real work would begin, and that the pitchers would be expected to give the batters their first try at curve pitching.

“I won't be around to-morrow,” Kennedy told the coach, after the order had been issued.

“Arm sore?” asked the coach anxiously.

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“No. Let them sample the other pitchers first.”

“Why?”

“There’s no use giving them the best right at the start. It may discourage them.”

The coach seemed to debate something for a moment. “All right,” he said at last. As Kennedy moved off, he stared after the boy. “I’m afraid your head’s getting too big—just a little too big,” he commented.

That night Curtis was plainly worried. He paced his room restlessly.

“Anything on your mind?” asked Bartley, looking up from the book he was studying.

“Yes,” said Curtis frankly. “We’re going against curve pitching to-morrow, and I was always more or less of a weak hitter. I’m anxious to make good.”

“But you won’t bat against Kennedy to-morrow. What are you worrying about?”

Curtis laid a hand on Bartley’s shoulder. “Dick,” he said soberly, “I’m not saying you’re a better pitcher than Kennedy, but I’ve batted against both of you on straight balls. I’d

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sooner face Kennedy than stand up against you. I don't know why it is, but that's the truth."

"Thank you, Curt," said Bartley, with a little tremble in his voice.

Next day, when the baseball squad started for the cage after recitations, Kennedy went to his room. He felt that he could afford to give the afternoon to some neglected Latin lessons. He had begun to lose his fear of Bartley, for he had dwelt much on Redway's words. The captain had said that the freshman might develop. That meant that Bartley had not yet arrived, while he—— Well, he was the best St. Mary's now had.

There was another reason, too, why the sophomore did not go to the cage. He reasoned that Bartley, whatever his ability, would probably not be at his best so early in the season. In that event, the batters would hammer him unmercifully. If that should happen, Kennedy wanted the freshman to have the center of the stage all to himself. He did not want anything to take the minds of Redway or the coach from



“ ‘Ned,’ said Murray, ‘ you should have seen it.’ ”

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the fact that Bartley's offerings were being slaughtered.

So, calmly and contentedly, he studied through the afternoon. As the early evening shadows fell he heard the baseball squad tramp into Winslow Hall and scatter along its various corridors. There was an excited hum to the sound of voices that came indistinctly to his ears. He knew what that hum meant. Something out of the ordinary must have happened at the cage that day. What?

A sudden fear crept over the pitcher. Perhaps—— He put on his overcoat and left the room.

He knew that Redway had a split finger from a foul tip of the day before. Murray must have caught the pitchers. Murray was never in a hurry to dress after he came out from under the showers. He was always the last to leave the gymnasium. The pitcher buttoned the collar of his coat and waited on the steps of Winslow Hall.

Soon Murray slowly came up the wide marble stairs.

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“How did the boys make out?” Kennedy asked carelessly.

“Ned,” said Murray, “you should have seen it. They swung, and they snapped, and they bunted, and they got only one ball outside the diamond—that was an easy fly to center. As I live, Jenkins’s eyes stuck out from his head. They couldn’t hit him—even Redway couldn’t hit him.”

“Who?” demanded Kennedy huskily.

“Bartley, the freshman.”

The pitcher’s heart seemed to be choking in his throat. “What—what did he have?”

“What did he have?” Murray’s voice sank to an awe-stricken whisper. “I’ve caught you, and I caught Turner last year in two of the smaller games. He had everything I ever saw, and he had a drop that broke in. I tell you, it was wonderful.”

CHAPTER III

"I'VE GOT YOU NOW"

EDWARD KENNEDY went quietly to his room. He placed his overcoat in a closet and sat down at his study table with his face in his hands. His Latin lesson was now forgotten.

"I should have gone to the cage to-day," he said at last. "They wouldn't have noticed his work so much. I suppose the other dub pitchers were pounded all over the place, and he just shone by contrast. Is this going to be Warwick High School all over again?"

In imagination he pictured Bartley mowing the batters down, one by one, as they faced him. He could even see the high, stretching reach, the momentary pause on one tense leg, and then the swift lunge of body and arm, as Bartley sent in the ball. Kennedy had seen the freshman mow down batters that way be-

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fore—at Warwick High School. The memory lent an added sting to his thoughts.

He went over Murray's words. So Jenkins's eyes had fairly stuck out? The boy swept his Latin books from the table and did not hear them when they fell. Last year he had played second fiddle to the mighty Turner. Now, when it seemed that he was about to step into Turner's shoes, was he going to play second fiddle to an unknown freshman?

The pitcher put on his coat again and started for the campus. He wanted to walk, and walk.

On the stairs he met Jenkins. The coach was probably on his way to Redway's room. The coach and the captain were together much at nights now, discussing the strength and weaknesses of the different candidates. Perhaps Jenkins was on his way now to talk over Bartley's work.

Kennedy caught his breath sharply. "Good evening, Jenkins," he said.

"Good evening," said the coach absently.

"I'll be out for practice to-morrow."

“I’VE GOT YOU NOW”

“Oh! It’s you, Kennedy. My mind was on other things. Report on time, will you?” And Jenkins went up the hall.

Kennedy went back to his room, banged his door and this time threw his overcoat in a corner.

“So he was thinking of other things and hardly saw me,” said the boy bitterly. “Thinking of Bartley’s work, I suppose.”

For a long time Kennedy sat motionless. At last he stood up and drew a deep breath.

“I’ll show them,” he vowed. “Wouldn’t notice me to-night. Thinking only of Bartley’s work now, I guess. So his eyes stuck out, eh? I’ll make his eyes stick out. I’ll go in to-morrow, and I’ll send them back as fast as they come to the plate. I’ll make somebody’s eyes stick out.”

When Kennedy entered the cage next day, he thought the candidates and the boys watching from beyond the base lines eyed him curiously.

Were they wondering how he’d take Bartley’s showing of the day before? Kennedy

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forced a smile to his lips, and walked toward the freshman, who was already in uniform.

"Understand you made a great showing yesterday, Dick," he called, loud enough for many to hear.

"They haven't their real batting eyes yet," said Bartley.

"Well, keep right after them."

"You go after them to-day," the freshman smiled.

Kennedy mistook that smile. He thought it was offered in sarcasm.

"That's what I'm here for," he muttered sourly.

When he came from the locker room, tightening his belt, he found most of the boys already in action. Standing in the doorway he studied Bartley, as the freshman pitched to Murray. Bartley was a well-built, active boy, about eighteen years old, quick of action and graceful in movement, with the suppleness and the alertness of the boy who has lived right. His bearing was confident, but not swaggering. His eyes were calm and fearless. The eyes

“I’VE GOT YOU NOW”

annoyed Kennedy. He strode out angrily to the foul lines.

One of the minor pitching candidates was on the mound, and the batters were slaughtering everything he sent up. Kennedy watched this for a while.

“That’s why Bartley shone,” he grunted. “The others were being pounded.”

Walking off to one side the star pitcher worked with a volunteer to limber up his arm. Soon he heard what he had been expecting:

“Kennedy! Kennedy!”

It was the coach’s voice. Kennedy pushed his way through the students outside the base lines.

“Go at them,” called Jenkins.

There was a hum from the students; a nervous quickening among the players. Kennedy felt the change.

“I’ll show them,” he vowed.

When he entered the raised pitcher’s box, after a while, he felt that not only were the students watching him, but that the squad, the coach, and even Redway were studying him in-

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tently. Curtis, at the plate, was nervously twitching a bat.

Curtis was known as a weak hitter. Kennedy was glad, for an instant, that he had Curtis to start with. He glanced back, saw that the boys behind him were in position, and signalled Murray that he would throw a sharp, jumping in-shoot. It was the best ball that he had, and he would use it freely to-day.

He wound up rapidly and shot the sphere toward the crouching Murray. Curtis swung, and the ball whistled over the pitcher's head. Kennedy did not have to turn around to know that it was a solid single to the outfield.

"What do you think of that?" shrieked a delighted freshman, from beyond the base lines.

"The first ball, too," yelled another freshman.

"And yesterday they didn't touch Bartley," screamed the first freshman, who was more interested in his classmates than in star pitchers.

"Luck," grunted Kennedy in a rage. "He couldn't do it again if he stood at the plate all day."

“I’VE GOT YOU NOW”

“Come on, Lightning,” shouted the coach.
“Don’t let that worry you.”

Worry him? The star pitcher scowled. Did they think he was worried? And then he remembered that only one ball had been hit out of the diamond while Bartley pitched.

“Right over, Ned; right over,” Murray was crooning from behind the bat.

Redway was at the plate, waiting quietly. Yesterday the ’Varsity captain had fallen weakly before the freshman.

“I must get you, anyway,” muttered Kennedy.

He wet his lips and pitched with all his strength. The first two balls Redway let pass; the third ball he met just before it broke. Soaring off from the bat, it traveled far above the heads of the outfielders and struck high on the back wall of the cage.

“Home run,” roared the students as a body.
“Give Redway a medal.”

“Everybody hit,” sang the freshmen as a class, remembering Bartley’s work. “Come on, now; everybody hit.”

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When the ball came back to the diamond, Kennedy's face had lost color. He was a good pitcher. Ordinarily he could be relied upon to mystify the batters. But now his own rage and his anxiety had sapped his strength and had played sad havoc with his cunning.

He tried desperately. He pitched with reckless abandon as to strained muscles. Yet boy after boy hit the best he sent up, and at each hit the students cheered the more. In the delight at finding they had a team that could hit, they forgot that their best pitcher was the boy that was being riddled.

Kennedy stuck it out as long as he could. But when Curtis hit safely for the third time, he took off his fielding glove, and, without a word, walked toward the locker room. For the first time since coming to St. Mary's he had quit under fire.

Usually the students shouted words of encouragement at a pitcher who had suffered a bad day. There was something in Kennedy's face that forbade this. They had cheered each time his delivery had been hit, but now they silently watched him go.

“I’VE GOT YOU NOW”

“Something wrong with him to-day,” thought the coach. “And he wanted them to bat against the worst pitchers first.”

But Jenkins did not voice his thought. Instead he called:

“Come on, Bartley. Go in there and get yours.”

Though Kennedy knew that Bartley was to follow him to the pitcher’s box, he did not have the heart to watch the freshman’s performance. He dressed in the gymnasium, and then hurried back to his room. Why had Bartley come to St. Mary’s? Why was he always in his way? Where did the money come from to send him to college?

Kennedy’s mouth of a sudden hung open. He had not thought of that before. Was it possible——

He wrote to his father, addressing the envelope with a flourish to “Michael Kennedy, Pres. Warwick Trust Company.” The letter was a chatty, light-hearted document, full of the news of school life. Toward the end it read:

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"By the way, young Bartley is a student here. They must have mortgaged the house to put him through college."

As Kennedy, after posting the letter, turned away from the mail box on the campus, he came face to face with Kaufman, the giant first baseman.

"I was in awful shape to-day," grinned the pitcher, playing his part.

"You were," was Kaufman's discouraging reply.

"Was—was Bartley any better?"

"He's a wonder," said Kaufman, this time with enthusiasm. "He had us eating out of his hand. Better watch out, Kennedy, or he'll have your job."

The pitcher growled something and walked back toward Winslow Hall.

Two days later he found a letter from his father when he came in from the cage, and read it by the light of his student's lamp. Toward the end he read what he was looking for:

“I’VE GOT YOU NOW”

“I note what you say about young Bartley. **Mr.** Bartley mortgaged his house and I advanced the money. Had I known that he intended to use it to send his boy through college I would have charged him 5% instead of 6%.”



“ ‘Bartley, I’ve got you now.’ ”

That last sentence was lost on the boy. His fist crashed on the study table, and the lamp lurched violently.

“So my father’s money is putting you through college, Bartley,” he croaked. “Well, you’ll not humiliate me here as you did at Warwick High. Bartley, I’ve got you now.”

CHAPTER IV

KENNEDY SUFFERS ANOTHER SHOCK

THE spring rains came early that year. The last trace of the winter's snow was washed away, the ground became soft and springy and finally the campus grass showed traces of green. Jenkins then gave the order that sent the squad from the cage to outdoor practice.

It was a happy crowd of boys that scampered about St. Mary's field in the warm spring sunshine. Happiest of them all was Ned Kennedy. The star pitcher had rounded into form, and appeared to be pitching every bit as good ball as Dick Bartley. Only Jenkins, the coach, noticed this difference—that while Kennedy seemed to be doing his best, the freshman pitcher did not appear to extend himself to the limit, and always seemed to have something in reserve.

KENNEDY SUFFERS ANOTHER SHOCK

Kennedy worked along as though none of the other St. Mary's pitchers showed anything that even vaguely resembled his form. His father's letter had made him a changed boy. He felt that he held the whip hand, and as the worry that had tortured him departed, his skill and his cunning returned. He pitched the ball that was expected of him, and in the self-satisfaction of his return to form forgot that Bartley might be improving, too.

After the freshman's second appearance on the pitching mound in the cage he ceased to be a thorough mystery to the batters. Now and then they hammered his offerings. Kennedy believed that Bartley's earlier showing was merely a flash in the pan. He did not know that the coach half suspected that the freshman was wisely not risking a strained arm in practice. And so Kennedy lived joyous afternoons on St. Mary's field, and wondered if the college weekly, after the Rockton game, would speak of him as well as it had spoken of Turner.

As he came on the field one day Redway met him with a beaming smile.

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"You pitchers are lucky, Ned," he said. "We got word from Turner this morning."

"What about him?" demanded Kennedy.

"You'll get the benefit of his experience. We didn't think he'd be able to get here until late in the season."

Turner teach him to pitch, now that he had developed that slow ball? Kennedy dared not utter to the captain what was in his thoughts.

"When is he coming?" he asked.

"To-morrow. It's the best news I've heard since the practice started."

Kennedy resolved that he would make no overtures to last year's star pitcher. He purposely arrived late at St. Mary's field next afternoon. Turner, in uniform, was standing near Bartley, and the freshman was pitching to Redway.

"Bah!" said Kennedy; "trying to curry favor. I might have known that."

Slowly, in order to use up all the time possible, he dressed in the gym before coming out on the field again. When at last he came over to the former pitcher, he held out a limp hand.

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“Hello, Turner,” he said indifferently.

“Hello, Lightning.” Turner slapped him on the back heartily. “You’re looking fine; heavier than last year, too.”

“About ten pounds.”

“They tell me you’re pitching great ball, and that you’ve got a corking slow one.”

“It’s fair,” said Kennedy, while a thrill went up and down his back.

“Show it to me, will you, old man?”

Kennedy felt his resentment vanish. That was the way to treat a fellow—no lording, no uppishness—just plain credit where credit was due.

“Anything you say yourself,” he laughed.

Standing to one side of Turner, he threw the slow ball half a dozen times with all the skill he could command. Turner, his eyes puckered, watched it critically.

“Looks pretty good,” he said at last.

“It is *good*,” called Redway from where he was catching the delivery.

“What do you think of it, Bartley?” Turner demanded.

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“It’s good,” said the freshman; “but it has a bad fault. Kennedy throws it differently from the way he throws his fast ball. A wise nine would be able to tell the difference before the sixth inning. After that they’d wait for that slow ball and just about kill it.”

Turner was thoughtful. “I haven’t seen his fast delivery. Put them in fast and slow, Lightning.”

Kennedy’s face reddened angrily, but he knew he had to obey. He pitched a dozen times before Turner moved.

“Bartley’s right,” said Turner at last. “You use an easier motion throwing the slow ball; I see it now. Let’s see how you hold it.”

Kennedy held out his strong, young hand, with the ball gripped for pitching.

“Jam it back farther toward the palm,” said Turner, “and grip it tighter with the finger-ends. Then you’ll have to give it plenty of force to carry it, and that will give you about the same pitching motion for both the fast and the slow. Try it that way, Kennedy, will you?”

Biting his lips to keep back his anger, Ken-

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nedy obeyed. Fast, then slow, then fast he sent them in. After the third ball Redway stood erect.

“Great!” he said. “You don’t realize it’s a slow ball until it floats right up to you.”

Kennedy, from his place, had also noticed a change in the ball. He now had an improved delivery—something that would stand him in good stead with men on the bases—but his anger blazed at the thought that it was the freshman who had corrected him.

“Why didn’t he tell me when we were alone?” he growled. “He waited until he had an audience.”

Kennedy quite forgot that Bartley had never before been asked for an opinion on the slow ball, and that he would have repulsed the freshman had Bartley come to him voluntarily.

Later he stood in the coaching box while the ‘Varsity—rather while the tentative ‘Varsity infield—played ground-hit balls. Curtis was playing third base.

“That’s a fine slow ball you got over to Redway,” he called. “I saw it.”

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“Forget it,” snapped Kennedy.

Curtis had heard the dialogue between Turner and Bartley. His lips puckered thoughtfully.

“So!” he said.

As now constituted, the 'Varsity was subject to change any day. Few of the boys were yet sure of their positions. But, as the nine stood, Jenkins lined it up that afternoon against the “Would-Bes,” as the substitutes were called. Turner pitched for the second nine, and Kennedy pitched for the 'Varsity.

With every nerve alive, Kennedy pitched his best. The game went seven innings, and though it was a sharp pitchers' duel, the 'Varsity held the better hitters. The school nine won by a score of 2 to 1.

“I beat the mighty Turner,” Kennedy whispered in glee, as he dressed in the gym. “I beat him!”

“That slow ball worked fine in the pinches,” said Redway. “I'm glad you detected the weakness, Bartley.”

Kennedy's glee was turned to gall. He felt

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no thrill of pleasure when Turner congratulated him before all the players.

That night, while Curtis and Bartley worked at their studies, Curtis suddenly spoke of what had been troubling him since the afternoon.

“Why did you correct Kennedy’s slow ball?” he asked. “It made him hopping mad.

Bartley put down his book. “How do you know that?”

“I told him his slow ball had improved, and he told me to forget it. I’d help a decent fellow, but I wouldn’t help a fellow who hadn’t sense enough to appreciate it.”

“Yes, you would,” said Bartley.

“I wouldn’t,” insisted Curtis stubbornly.

“You would,” said Bartley again. “Suppose Rockton solved that slow ball in the big game and just murdered it. Who’d be responsible if St. Mary’s lost? I would, if I hadn’t told what I knew. We are all St. Mary’s men, Curt. That comes first.”

The third baseman did not try to answer the argument. He knew that Bartley was right.

“Kennedy may not pitch the big game this

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year," he said wisely. "I've been observing things. Every time you work Jenkins watches you like a hawk."

Bartley made no reply.

When Kennedy came out on St. Mary's field next day, he was all smiles. His good-humor had returned over night. It had dawned on him that though the freshman had corrected the mistake of his slow ball, Turner had nevertheless praised it, and so had Redway. Turner, by the same token, had not said a good word about Bartley's pitching. The only person who had praised the freshman was Murray, and Murray was only the substitute catcher.

Then, again, Kennedy reasoned that beating Turner in the practise game, even though he had the 'Varsity behind him, had given him added prestige. In this he was right. When he came out on the field the students boomed the college cheer and ended with an uproarious:

"Kennedy! Kennedy! Kennedy!"

"You're the goods, Kennedy!"

"Get ready for the Rockton slaughter, boys!"

"Poor Rockton!"

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The pitcher felt a warm, friendly glow creep through his veins.

Turner, when he came out on the field, gave his attention to Kennedy and Bartley. The coach had by this time decided that, barring a miracle, the other three pitching candidates were not good enough to face even a minor school nine. There was little need of wasting time on them.

"Try that slow ball again," ordered Turner. "Let's see how it works to-day."

The coach was standing behind his pitchers. Kennedy did his best.

"That's what I call pitching," said Jenkins, after one ball had seemed to hang in the air before it broke.

Kennedy, with gladness singing in his heart, kept jumping the ball toward the catcher, as though he had not heard.

"You've got it," said Turner, after ten minutes of work. "It's the prettiest slow ball I ever saw. How about it, Jenkins?"

"Right," said the coach.

"Don't use it too often," continued Turner.



“ ‘That’s what I call pitching,’ said Jenkins.”

“Save it for the pinches. You’ll have them breaking their backs vainly trying to hit it out.”

After that Turner seemed to forget that Kennedy was there. He gave all his attention to Bartley.

The sophomore took this to mean that he was fit, and that the freshman was not. He moved off to one side and called to Murray.

“I feel good to-day,” he said. “I’ve got speed to burn.”

“You certainly have,” groaned Murray, as one ball caught him partly on the bare hand.

Pitching to the substitute catcher, Kennedy

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lost all interest in his rival's work. Time after time he heard Turner say:

“Try that again, Bartley.”

After a while Kennedy began to wonder what ball it was Turner was calling for so often. He watched, lazily at first, and then with a quickening, fearful interest. Bartley was pitching the ball that Murray had said was truly wonderful—the mysterious drop that broke in.

Kennedy, his ambition gone, forgot to pitch. Murray walked in toward him.

“Isn't that a beauty?” asked the catcher.

“Get back,” said Kennedy roughly. “My arm's a little stiff to-day.”

“You said you felt fine——”

“Never mind. My arm's stiff; I need lots of work.”

But Kennedy pitched only a few listless balls. Soon he walked away, and, dropping down on the grass outside the base lines, watched the freshman.

“I thought you said you wanted lots of work,” questioned Murray.

“I'm tired,” said Kennedy.

Turner motioned to Redway; and the coach, the captain and last year's star gathered around Bartley. Kennedy wished he could hear what they were saying, but he dared not show his anxiety by walking toward the group.

After a while, Turner, Bartley and Redway walked to the outfield. Kennedy's eyes followed them eagerly. At last a relieved smile broke over his face.

"Turner's pitching," he breathed; "showing the freshman how to pitch, sure as you live. He didn't have to show me how to deliver the ball."

Kennedy was all animation again. The coach called him to the diamond, and he walked spryly to the pitcher's box. He sent over nothing but straight balls, and every boy went up with instructions to bunt. Jenkins believed in giving his pitchers plenty of work handling these difficult splashes.

"I've seen bunts drive poor-fielding pitchers to desperation," he used to say. He always added: "But not at St. Mary's."

Kennedy was still handling the teasing short

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grounders when Redway came in from the outfield. The pitcher rubbed his sleeves across his face and grinned.

“Showing the freshman how to deliver?” he asked.

“No,” said Redway shortly. “Bartley was showing Turner how to pitch that in-drop.”

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST CLASH

CURTIS, in his room, sulked in the depths of a chair and stared gloomily.

“Toothache?” asked Bartley.

“No,” said the third baseman; “Jenkins. He’s at me again.”

“Errors?”

“No; hitting.”

“What’s wrong?”

“I don’t know.”

“Do you watch for the break?”

“Yes; and when the break comes I put muscle into the swing. But it’s generally a weak grounder or a pop fly. I can’t meet the ball on the nose. Spencer’s hitting well, and I’m off the ’Varsity unless I pick up in a mighty big hurry. Jenkins jumped all over me to-day.”

“I’ve been watching your hitting,” observed Bartley. “A pitcher always studies the batter

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to find his weakness. This is the first time you ever went against much curve pitching?"

"Yes."

"Then, take my advice. Don't swing at the ball; snap at it. You say you watch for the break. That's half the battle. But you take a lunging swing, and those big swings eat up a second. When you snap you have that second longer to judge the ball, and seconds count in batting. Come out early to-morrow morning, and I'll give you some practice."

The third baseman knew that next day Bartley was to pitch in the afternoon the last practise game for the second nine, and that Kennedy would pitch for the 'Varsity. Though Kennedy and Bartley had pitched to 'Varsity and scrub, it would be the first time these rivals had worked against each other in real battle, for the coach was determined that next day's encounter would be a fight. Three days later came the opening game with little Orion.

"If you pitch to me to-morrow morning, you may not be fit to go nine innings in the afternoon," said Curtis anxiously. "You're going

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in against Kennedy, Dick, and he'll have the 'Varsity behind him. Let my batting practice go until some other day."

Bartley laughed. "I'll worry about all that, Curt. You get your practice."

"But you'll have to chase the ball whenever I hit it. You'll have no fielders working behind you."

"I'll do the worrying," insisted the pitcher. "You get your practice."

To Kennedy that practice game meant much. For one thing, it gave him a chance to show that he was the master of the freshman. Ever since the day he had beaten Turner he had longed for a chance like this.

"I'll make him eat humble pie," the sophomore told himself. "I'll work my head off. I beat Turner, and I'll beat him."

There was another reason why Kennedy wanted to win. He knew that Bartley would pitch some of the games, but he wanted the honor of pitching the opening game, as well as the big game with Rockton. A great crowd of loyal graduates, anxious to judge the prospects

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of the nine for the season, always attended the opening game. Before this gathering of St. Mary's men Kennedy felt that he should be given a chance to show his worth. If he won over Bartley in the final practise game, he could then ask to be assigned to pitch the game that came three days later.

The fact that Kennedy and Bartley would work against each other brought out practically the entire student body. Long before this, the school had scented some antagonism between the boys, and the students looked for a hard battle.

The freshmen and sophomore classes came down almost in a body. Then they lined up in different sections of the stands and cheered for their men. The freshmen were loyal to Bartley, and the sophomores were no less loyal to Kennedy. So while the two nines worked out on the field the rival cheers swept across the diamond:

“Go to it, Kennedy!”

“Show them what's what, you soph!”

“They can't beat you, Bartley!”

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

“Eat ’em alive, you freshie!”

Even the coach felt that the game would be bitterly fought. Yet he did not neglect to call the boys of both nines around him.

“I want every man to play his best to-day,” he announced. “This is not merely a practice game. It’s a test of whether or not the ’Varsity can hold its own in the games to come. If it can’t, I want to know it. Go in there and play ball every minute. The pitchers are expected to give the best that’s in them.”

Kennedy smiled in satisfaction. That was what he wanted—a test. He was glad that the coach looked at it in that light. It meant the humiliation of the freshman. He had feared the rivalry of Bartley with a new fear since he had heard how the mighty Turner had acted as the freshman’s pupil.

The second nine went to bat first, and the students leaned forward in the stands. The sophomore class gave its sturdy cheer as encouragement to Kennedy, and the star pitcher, cool, determined, quickly showed form that meant much to St. Mary’s. The first two boys to face

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him went out on strikes. The next player popped weakly to Curtis.

As Bartley arose from the visiting team's bench, Murray was strapping on a chest protector.

"Right after them," he murmured. "You can do it, Dick. Feed them that in-drop."

The freshman smiled. "We'll give them a fight," he promised; "a pretty good fight, too."

"Now, boys," Jenkins barked, as the second nine took their places, "on your toes all the time."

"Eat 'em alive, Bartley," howled the freshman class.

The coach felt a glow of pride as Bartley opened the last half of the inning. Come what would, he had two star pitchers, and two catchers who thoroughly understood their business. He did not have to worry about his batteries.

Bartley quickly showed that it was to be the battle the students expected. Kaufman, Hardy and Redway faced him in order. They were all dangerous boys with the bat, but the freshman pitcher sent each of them back to the bench on

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puny little taps to the infield. The second nine, behind Bartley, was playing with the sturdy steadiness of veterans.

"A fine lad," murmured the coach kindly.

"He's got everything," Redway informed the 'Varsity when he went back to the bench.

"We'll get to him," Kennedy told himself, as he took the field again. "We have the hitters."

Curtis was the first boy to face Bartley in the third inning. He had not yet lost his reputation as a weak hitter. As he took his position at the plate the coach stared and made a move as though to leave the foul lines; then he thought better of it and stood still.

"What's the boy up to?" he muttered. "He never batted that way before."

Heretofore the third baseman had held his bat well back across the shoulder and had swung savagely at the ball. Now he held the bat almost in front of him, and a little to the right.

Bartley pitched, and Curtis's bat seemed to travel but a few inches. The wood met the ball squarely—the sound told that. Curtis

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scampered down to first base while the center fielder was taking the ball on the first bound.

"It takes a freshie to do it," chanted the freshman class.

Kennedy half rose from the bench, and then suddenly dropped back. He felt that in his eagerness he had almost betrayed his anxiety. He was almost sure that the coach had seen him start.

"We've got him now," he found himself saying. "If Curtis can hit him, anybody can."

"Don't be so sure of that," warned Redway. "Any time you get two or three hits in a row off this boy, you're doing remarkably well."

The hitting stopped right there. An attempted sacrifice developed into a little fly, and Curtis had to make a desperate slide to get back to base. The next man swung vainly at three pitched balls, to the great delight of the freshman class. Then Curtis died in a vain effort to steal second. There was no disgrace in that. Few players stole bases on either Murray or Redway.

As Curtis crossed the diamond and picked

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up his glove near the third-base line the coach nodded encouragingly.

“Good work, boy. Keep it up. That was a solid rap.”

Curtis's eyes followed Bartley. “Dick,” he said aloud, “you're the whitest boy in college. With a man on base, that hit might have lost you the game. You knew you were going to pitch against us to-day.”

Inning by inning the game went on. As was expected, the second nine was woefully weak at the bat, but played a hair-lifting game in the field. Some of the spirit of the students in the stands had entered their blood. After all, Kennedy was the college star and Bartley was one of them—one of the second division. They would fight loyally for him until the last man was out.

“Now we score,” said Kennedy each inning, but the runs did not come.

As the game went on, with neither side sending a man across the plate, worried lines crept into the star pitcher's face. He had expected a fight, but he had not figured on this kind of

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nerve-racking battle. He had been sure that the 'Varsity hitters would solve Bartley's curves after an inning or two. As the innings passed, and they failed to hit safely, he raged at their inability.

Once, when Hardy came back to the bench after striking out, the pitcher's feelings found expression in words.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "You've been swinging like a crazy man. Have you lost your eye? He hasn't a thing."

"I notice you haven't hit him," retorted Hardy.

"Everybody knows pitchers are not hitters."

"You'll never upset the rule," shot back the outfielder.

"That's enough of that," ordered Redway. "Have it out after the game."

Something of the pitcher's harassed feelings crept into his work. For a few moments, in the seventh inning, he faltered. It was almost a fatal collapse. With one boy out, three of the second nine hit safely. The last rap Curtis

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was lucky to knock down, and Kennedy was lucky that the smash had not gone past Curtis, for then one or more of the runners would have scored. As it was, three boys of the second nine danced on the base paths, and the freshman class almost tore down the stands.

For the first time that day Kennedy sensed the specter of possible defeat. The vision unstrung him. Redway, behind the bat, craftily seemed to divine the pitcher's terror. Artfully he delayed the game, and then coaxed and pleaded until finally the star settled down.

When his nerve came back Kennedy was again the effective pitcher, though, in truth, a somewhat shaky pitcher at that. One of the second nine hit to the box, and the man on third was thrown out at the plate. Kennedy's trembling nerves showed in the fact that he almost threw the ball over Redway's head. Then the last batter whipped a twisting foul high into the air, and Redway was waiting for it when it came down.

Kennedy sighed heavily as he left the box. He saw the coach walk thoughtfully along the

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foul lines. The hand in the pitcher's fielding glove was coldly moist. He had had a tight squeeze.

Bartley, crossing the diamond, passed the sophomore.

"Good work," he commented. "You deserved to pull out of that, Kennedy."

"That's nothing," said Kennedy sourly; "I'm at my best in the pinches."

In his heart, though, he felt that he would not have to pitch harder when he worked in the Rockton game.

Jenkins had ceased to care how the game ended. He had learned that the 'Varsity was ready to play for its life. While Kennedy's weak-heartedness had momentarily disturbed him, he had the consoling knowledge that his two big pitchers were in grand condition. He smiled contentedly.

The ninth inning opened and found both sides still scoreless. The second nine went out in one, two, three order. Then, after two of the 'Varsity had been retired, Curtis came to bat.

As he selected his stick from the line of clubs

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in front of the bench, Kennedy leaned over his shoulder eagerly.

“You hit him once,” breathed the pitcher. “Go up there and hit it out again.”

The third baseman merely grunted. He had taken a dislike to Kennedy.

At the plate he stood with the bat almost in front of him. Jenkins, during the game, had decided that there was method in the boy's pose. He watched him curiously. The outfielders, remembering that short-line hit in the third inning, crept closer in toward the base paths.

“Hit it out,” barked the coach from the third-base line. “You can do it.”

“Make 'em move back the fence,” shrilled Hardy from the other side of the diamond.

Curtis stood motionless. Two balls swept past and plunked into Murray's mit, and he offered at neither. The umpire called them strikes.

“Go get a pair of glasses,” taunted Murray.

Curtis said nothing. Suddenly his eyes narrowed, and his bat snapped at the ball. The

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stick did not travel far, but there was weight and muscle behind the slash.

At first it looked like a long single, or possibly a two-base hit. Then, suddenly, the students saw the right fielder, who had been leisurely backing up, start to run toward the fence with his back to the ball.

A roar broke from the stands. This time Kennedy bounded openly to his feet, joyous, unafraid.

"Come on," he pleaded.

A slower man might have been held at third base on the hit; but Curtis was fleet of foot. He had done his one hundred yards in eleven seconds. He ran with all his speed, and was crossing the plate, where Murray stood woefully, before the ball was returned to the discouraged infield.

The stands were still cheering, and sounding loudest was the class cheer of the sophomores. Stopping short, Curtis turned and stared at Bartley.

A shadow had fallen across the freshman pitcher's face. As he looked, a lump came into

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Curtis's throat. Then Bartley turned and saw him. Instantly the pitcher's face cleared, and he smiled good-naturedly.

"The whitest boy in the school," said Curtis softly.

A golden song sang in Kennedy's breast. He had earned the right to pitch the Orion game. He had held the second nine safe in the pinch; Bartley had lost out with the bases clear.

Kennedy gathered up the sweater he wore between innings and covered his pitching arm. He walked to where the coach, Murray, Redway and Curtis were all standing, near the home plate.

"The freshman gave me an awful fight," he announced charitably. "I had my hands full trimming him."

Curtis swung around. "Trimming him? Why, you couldn't trim him in a hundred years. He defeated himself. I know what I'm talking about."

There was a strange note in the boy's voice. The coach shook him by the shoulder.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.



“He ran with all his speed.”

THE FIRST CLASH

“Didn’t we get only two hits?”

“Yes,” said Jenkins.

“Didn’t J get both of them?”

“Yes.”

“Why? I’ll tell you. Last night I let Bartley know that I was worried about my hitting. He advised me to discard the swing, and to chop at the ball. This morning he came out and pitched to me for an hour.”

“What has that got to do with to-day’s game?” demanded Kennedy.

“Go on,” said the coach.

“The work he did this morning must have taken some of his strength. He had no infield behind him; no outfield, and he chased all the balls I hit. Two of them rolled to the fence. All this must have tired him.”

“Anything else?” asked the coach.

“Yes. He knew he was due to pitch to-day—and the whole school knew that this game was to be hard fought. Look how they turned out. Yet he insisted on giving me batting practice. He told me he owed it to St. Mary’s to develop my hitting if he could—that a hit from me

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might be needed to win a game. So I went with him this morning and started to chop at the ball. You see what happened this afternoon? I tell you he beat himself."

Kennedy felt uncomfortable. He didn't like the look on the coach's face. Anyway, the scene had been carried on long enough. If a pitcher got himself out of condition, wasn't it his own fault if he lost a game? He leaned toward Jenkins.

"Who'll catch me in the Orion game?" he asked.

"The Orion game," said the coach absently. "Oh!" He came to himself with a start. "I'll pitch Bartley in that game."

CHAPTER VI

CURTIS SCENTS TROUBLE

KENNEDY'S steps lagged as he left St. Mary's field. The shower bath failed to exhilarate him; the coarse Turkish towel did not work up a delicious tingle in his skin. He was trying vainly to reason out this blow that had fallen upon his hopes. He had felt certain of pitching the Orion game. He had written his father to come down to see him work, and his father had sent word that he would come.

At first he thought wildly that Jenkins was playing favorites. He rejected this thought quickly. He had labored under Jenkins the year before; he knew Jenkins. The coach gave to each of the boys his just due.

Somehow Kennedy felt that Curtis's words had induced the coach to select Bartley for the opening game. But why? The boy could not fathom the mystery.

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“It’s luck,” the pitcher complained. “He always was lucky. He got all the best of it at Warwick High; now he’s getting all the best of it here. But I’ll stick. I hold the whip hand——”

The boy stopped. His father was coming. Well, he’d talk it over with him.

In the two days that followed the star pitcher felt a change on the campus. The freshmen no longer nudged each other as he passed. Bartley was one of them, was of their class. Turning from Kennedy, they began to lionize the boy who had held the ’Varsity to two hits in the last practice game.

All this stung the sophomore. Nor did it lessen the hurt to his pride to find that the upper classmen now greeted Bartley as cordially as they greeted him. The year before, when he was a freshman, the upper classmen had given him scant notice. For that matter, less than a month ago they had passed Bartley, the freshman, by. Now, however, it was Bartley, the ’Varsity pitcher—the boy who had dumfounded the best batters on the ’Varsity and

who was to pitch the opening game of the season.

Following that last practice game, three boys of the second nine had been drafted as 'Varsity substitutes, and the second nine as a whole had been dismissed with the college cheer and the thanks of the coach. As a consequence, there were now fewer boys on St. Mary's field each afternoon for practice. From these boys Kennedy wisely hid his true feelings. He took his daily workouts with an appearance of cheerfulness; and only Curtis, who watched the sophomore closely, guessed the gnawing pain that tore his heart.

The morning of the Orion game the pitcher did not join the crowd of students and graduates that made merry on the historic campus. He wanted to be alone. He had read that week's issue of the college weekly—had read the article that linked his name with that of Bartley. Last year the weekly had spoken of Turner as "St. Mary's only pitcher." This year, just when he was stepping into Turner's shoes——

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He cast the paper from him.

About noon, traveling through the side streets, he went to the railroad station to meet his father. He would explain the situation fully; his father would understand and would advise him.

But his father was disconcertingly blunt when he told him, hesitatingly, that he would not pitch that day—that the honor had gone to young Bartley.

“You wrote me,” said Mr. Kennedy, “that you were never in better form. Don’t you feel fit?”

“Yes, sir. I’m in shape to pitch winning ball this minute.”

“Why is Bartley pitching to-day?”

The question touched a spark to the boy’s anger. He answered recklessly:

“Because the coach is playing favorites,” he blazed. “Only last Wednesday I trimmed Bartley, 1 to 0, and pitched myself out of a hole with three on bases and only one out. Yet Jenkins sends Bartley in to-day.”

“The coaches never played favorites when I

CURTIS SCENTS TROUBLE

was at college," said Mr. Kennedy. He had been a member of the track team in his college years, and knew what athletics meant. "Are you sure you are the better pitcher?"

The boy could not speak falsely with his father's calm, penetrating eyes bent full upon him. The truth—he had not even admitted it to himself—was wrung from him.

"No," he said miserably.

His father patted his shoulder. "I was beginning to think you had developed a streak I would not care to see in my son. Be honest with yourself, Ned, and you'll come out of this all right."

The boy had intended to speak of what he termed "the whip hand." Now he dared not bring up the subject. He led his father to the stand where the St. Mary's rooters were gathered, and then went to the gym to get into uniform.

"They may hammer him from the box," he kept telling himself.

It was a game that brought joy to the hearts of the friends of St. Mary's. The nine played

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fast, errorless ball. The infield worked with the smoothness and precision of a well-oiled machine. At the bat there was no effort for individual glory. The boys batted together and they batted well. Orion was outclassed from the start.

Rockton men, sent to the game to bring back reports on St. Mary's strength, left the grounds with long faces.

Kennedy, sitting on the St. Mary's bench under the grandstand, paid no attention to the fielding, and scarcely noticed the batting. He watched Bartley to the exclusion of all else. As the innings passed, he realized with an acute pang that the freshman was pitching grand ball—the kind that invariably wins.

In the fourth inning Bartley retired Orion on four pitched balls. The coach leaned over Kennedy's shoulder.

“That's pitching, isn't it?”

The boy nodded dully, without realizing who had asked the question.

It seemed to Kennedy that between each inning the stands, without much cause, arose and

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cheered Bartley. The sound, coming so often, at last grated on his nerves. There had been games last year—the minor games—when the stands had stood up and had cheered him just that way. Now he forgot that.

During the seventh inning he turned to the coach.

“My father’s in the stand. There’s no use of my staying, is there? He’ll last.”

“Yes,” said the coach, nodding toward Bartley; “he’ll last.”

There was conviction in Jenkins’s voice, as though he would sooner believe that the heavens would fall than that Bartley would weaken. Last year, Kennedy remembered, Turner had always been held on the bench whenever he pitched.

After the game Kennedy met his father. They dined at a restaurant and spoke of affairs back at Warwick. Not until his train was almost due did Mr. Kennedy speak about the game.

“Ned,” he said kindly, “I like Bartley. I watched him closely all afternoon. We all have

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our little struggles and our little disappointments, son, and most of the disappointments are not as great as we think them when they happen. I want you and Bartley to be friends when you come back to Warwick.”

The boy watched the train until its red tail-lights disappeared. He laughed; and coming from just a boy the laugh had an unpleasant sound. Bartley, his friend? That was impossible.

Portions of the crowd from the game still thronged the station. To right, to left of him, it seemed that everybody was speaking Bartley's name.

“If this keeps on,” muttered Kennedy, “they'll have Bartley pitching all the big games, and I'll be pitching the games that count for little, just as I did last year.”

Turning in sudden, fixed determination, he hurried toward Winslow Hall. His mind was made up. He reasoned that his plan was the only way out. It was the only way in which he could save the structure of his hopes.

As he entered the dormitory building he met



“ ‘You are standing in my light. You must withdraw.’ ”

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Bartley almost in the doorway. "Come to my room," he said. "I want to talk to you. It's important."

Wondering at the invitation, the freshman followed.

"Bartley," said Kennedy coldly, when they faced each other, "I came here this year expecting to pitch the big games. You are standing in my light. You must withdraw."

"Why?" Bartley demanded.

"Because my father's money has made it possible for you to get an education."

Bartley drew back a step, and, laying a trembling hand on a chair, steadied himself.

"Are you mean enough to take advantage of that?" he asked at last.

"Yes," said Kennedy bitterly. "To what other man in Warwick could your father have gone for help? My father's money is putting you through college. I have the right to demand that you sacrifice yourself for his son. Do you understand?"

Curtis, coming downstairs later, saw the door of Kennedy's room slowly open. Bartley

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came out into the hall. In the gaslight Bartley's face seemed white and drawn.

“So they've clashed at last,” said Curtis under his breath. “I knew it had to come. I don't know what happened in that room, but it means little good for St. Mary's. The coach must be told about this.”

CHAPTER VII

THE COACH HEARS NEWS

LIKE many boys of his age, Richard Bartley had but a vague knowledge of business. He knew that his father was paying interest on the money that had been borrowed, but he looked upon this as a formality that went with all loans.

Though he was the son of a banker, Ned Kennedy's notions of finance were also hazy. He truly believed that Bartley could thank the Kennedy money for his education, and Bartley, unfortunately, cherished the same belief. The freshman had a sense of honor that impelled him to meet his obligations rigidly, whether they were real or fancied.

The boy felt that Kennedy, in demanding that he cease to be a rival for the honor of pitching the big games, had taken a cowardly advantage. But in his heart he felt that the sophomore had some right to make the request.

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The freshman believed that if he continued to display the form he had shown up to this time he would be sent in for one of the big games—the Marshall game, for instance. He would not, in that case, be discharging the obligation he owed to Kennedy. Trying to reason out the problem, he at last came to a definite conclusion. He would pretend that his arm was lame; that would most certainly bar him from the big games.

Once he thought of writing to his father about his troubles. After a night of deliberation he rejected this idea. Why should he trouble his father with his disappointments? Had he written, both he and Kennedy would have been saved many wretched days.

Because his ambition was gone, his playing became listless. The coach, at the height of his joy in the possession of two star pitchers, suddenly found cause to worry. He noticed that Bartley seemed to have lost his ginger, and that he pitched as though pitching was a sore effort.

“Going stale!” thought the coach, in a panic.

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He knew what it meant for a boy to lose his speed. He had seen instances in his many years of handling athletes where ball players, after slowing up, never regained their form.

“How are you feeling?” Jenkins carelessly asked the freshman.

“All right,” said the boy.

“Feel tired after pitching a few innings?”

“No; why?”

“I had an idea you were working too hard. You’re in shape. Take things easy. Rest a few days.”

The boy was not deceived. “He thinks I’m slowing up,” he muttered.

The troubled look in the coach’s eyes put things in a new light. The boy began to see that aside from what he owed Kennedy, he also owed loyalty to St. Mary’s.

It took hours of torturing thought before Bartley finally made up his mind. He decided that he would manage somehow to get just enough real work each day to make sure that he would be in shape to pitch if called on. Then, if Kennedy should ever be knocked from the

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box, he could take the star pitcher's place with a clear conscience. He did not see how Kennedy could object to that. At the same time, he would be remaining loyal to St. Mary's.

In obedience to Jenkins's instructions to "take things easy," Bartley kept away from the athletic field for two days, and did not witness the Madison game. Just about the time the game started, and while he was moping in his dormitory room, it dawned on him that the nine would be in a bad way if Kennedy should be hit hard, with no relief pitcher on the bench. Feverishly the boy waited for a report from the game. A great load left his mind when Curtis, bounding into the room at last, told him that Kennedy had pitched superbly and had easily shut out the smaller school.

When the freshman came back to St. Mary's field again, Jenkins looked him over carefully.

"Eyes are clear," commented the coach. "Guess he was just a little too finely drawn. He needed that rest."

But when Bartley started to pitch to Murray, the catcher was soon frankly puzzled. He

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had come to know every bend and break in Bartley's curves, and he could not understand the change he saw. For the most part, the freshman pitched indifferent ball—the kind of ball that loses games. Now and then he would shoot them in with all his former strength and suddenly, in the midst of this, without warning and seemingly without cause, he would lose form again. The ball would break erratically, and there would be no speed behind it.

At such times the catcher would vainly rack his brain for an explanation. Finally, after the freshman had been pitching for twenty minutes, Murray signalled enough, took off his glove and went over to the coach.

“I'm afraid there's something wrong with Bartley,” he announced.

The coach turned quickly. Bartley had appeared to be so fit that he had not bothered going over to see how he was making out.

“What is it?” he demanded. “Tell me; what's wrong?”

“I don't know,” said the catcher. “Sometimes he has everything, and all in an instant

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he goes to pieces and has nothing. I can't understand it."

The coach was thoughtful. "You haven't spoken to anybody about this, have you, Murray?"

"No."

"Don't. It might take heart out of the nine if they thought there was anything wrong with Bartley. I guess we'll bring him around all right."

Jenkins felt that the time had come to go into the matter. He could no longer afford to take chances. He had not spoken to Bartley when his pitching first lost form, for fear the freshman might worry himself completely out of condition. He had known worry to do just that before. There was Bruce, last year's full-back, for instance.

Jenkins, very quietly, so as not to attract attention, called the freshman aside and took him behind the grand stand, where they were out of sight of both students and players.

"Murray thinks there's something wrong with your pitching. What is it?"

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"I don't know," said the boy weakly. "I think it's my arm."

"What's wrong with it?"

"That I don't know, either."

"How long has it been that way?"

"A week or so."

"Why didn't you tell me about this before?"

"I thought it was only a passing lameness, and that it didn't matter much. Sometimes I get the break on my ball and my arm doesn't bother me a bit. Then again it seems to hurt me when I throw."

"Where?"

The boy laid his hand over the muscle on the upper arm—the long-swelling muscle that runs up to the shoulder on the outside. This muscle gets a severe straining when a drop is pitched, and Bartley's best ball was the drop that broke in.

The coach's face was serious as he rolled up the sleeve of the pitcher's right arm. He carefully pressed the flesh from wrist to elbow, then up to the shoulder and then ran practiced fin-

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gers back over the shoulder muscles. At last he came back to the muscle that the boy had indicated, and slowly kneaded that. As he worked he watched Bartley's face. The boy did not wince.

"Does your arm hurt when I press?"

"No."

"Not even when I press this muscle?"

"No."

The coach scratched his head in perplexity. "I can't understand it," he confessed. "If a muscle were strained it should be sore to the touch. Yet your arm doesn't hurt you. This is too big a job for me. I'll have a doctor examine it. We'll use the X-rays on it, too."

The boy's face paled. He had not thought of that. What if the doctor reported that his arm was sound, and the X-rays later verified this diagnosis?

"It will be all right in a couple of days," he said hastily.

"We'll take no chances," said Jenkins. "Don't use that arm very much. Understand?"

Though the coach had gone behind the grand

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stand quietly, the movement had not escaped the eyes of the watchful Curtis. The third baseman had been wide-awake since the night he had seen Bartley come from Kennedy's room. He had noticed Murray talking earnestly to the coach, and he had witnessed the disappearance of Jenkins and the freshman pitcher.

When Jenkins and Bartley came out on the field, Curtis, apparently carelessly lounging on the grass, gave each face a searching look. What he saw on Jenkins's face made him frown. He shrewdly guessed something of what had happened.

"This can't go on much longer," he commented, but that night he said not a word on the subject to his room-mate.

Next afternoon a doctor from the town came out to St. Mary's field. Redway had been told by Jenkins of what had befallen Bartley, and he was one of the party of four that met in the gymnasium. There the doctor went over the pitcher's arm with professional care. The examination left him all at sea.

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“It isn’t sore to the touch?” he questioned for the tenth time.

“No soreness,” said Bartley.

“And yet it hurts when you use your arm as though to pitch?”

“Yes.”

The doctor shook his head. “I can’t make it out. That arm appears to be as sound as mine.”

Keeping out of sight of the players on the field, the party, after Bartley had taken off his uniform, went over to the laboratory, where an X-ray machine had been installed for the benefit of the medical classes. For a few moments the revealing light was thrown on the arm. The doctor acknowledged himself baffled.

“I can’t even find a misplaced ligament,” was his statement. “So far as I can see, that arm is perfect.”

The coach turned to Redway. “Tell Kennedy he’ll have to pitch Saturday’s game. By that time we ought to have a specialist here from Chicago.”

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It dawned on the freshman with renewed force what this part he was playing meant to Jenkins and to the college. It must, indeed, be a serious matter, when the coach would send to Chicago for a high-priced specialist. Then suddenly the boy remembered that none of the other pitching candidates had shown form that would justify Jenkins in sending them in to pitch even the minor games. That left the school with but one pitcher for an entire season, for only two games had thus far been played.

The boy reasoned that the coach would not work him in the box while he complained of his arm. If he ceased complaining he might be assigned to a big game or two, and then Kennedy would not be getting what he had demanded as his due. As matters now stood, the coach had but one sterling pitcher—Kennedy. The sophomore could not be worked in every encounter. In desperation the coach would have to work one of the other pitchers, and that would probably mean——

“Lost games,” whispered the boy.

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Curtis, whose eyes of late seemed to miss nothing, had got a glimpse of the party in the gymnasium, and at once decided that the stranger was a doctor. As soon as practice was over for the day, he dressed and hurried back to Winslow Hall.

He found Bartley dejectedly pacing the room. "This time the third baseman plunged into his subject.

"Why have you been cutting practice so much lately?" he demanded.

"My arm is lame," said Bartley, after a silence.

"Wasn't your arm examined to-day?"

"Yes."

"By a doctor?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"Never mind that. What did the doctor say about it?"

"He said it was all right. They're going to call in a specialist."

Curtis took a bold plunge. "Isn't it all right?" he asked bluntly.

Bartley started and caught himself.

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“What do you know about pitching arms?” he snapped.

A moment later he wanted to recall the words, but they were out. Well, what else, under the circumstances, could he have said? He tried, though, to make amends.

“I didn’t mean to be uncivil, Curt. I know you’re interested in my arm.”

“Not half as much as St. Mary’s,” said Curtis.

Bartley kicked savagely at the floor rug and said nothing.

The days were getting longer. In the soft twilight Curtis studied his room-mate’s face. The third baseman had all a fine boy’s contempt for the bearer of tales. That was why he had said nothing about his suspicions.

Now, as he studied Bartley, he decided that a time for action had come. He felt certain that Bartley was loyal to St. Mary’s. He reasoned that whatever had happened for some cause his room-mate’s lips were sealed. Then, for the good of the nine, somebody else must speak.

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Curtis sighed heavily, as though the duty that confronted him was distasteful. At last he reached for his hat.

"I won't be long," he said.

He went upstairs to Redway's room. He found Jenkins and the captain talking earnestly. As soon as he entered the room the talking ceased.

"You were discussing Bartley?" Curtis asked.

The coach appeared surprised. "Why should we be talking about Bartley?"

But Curtis was not to be so easily put off. "Have you sent for that specialist?"

"What do you know about specialists?" asked the coach suddenly.

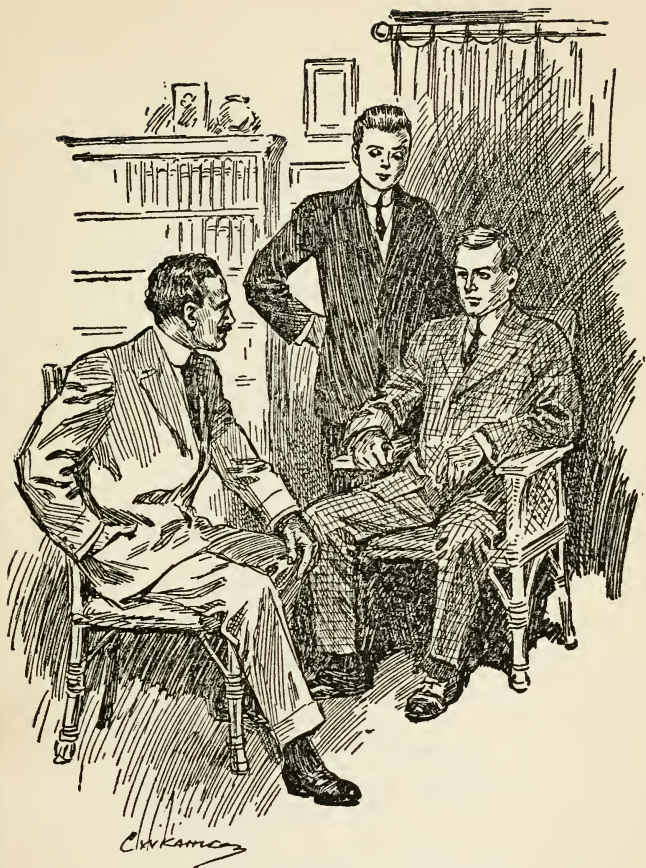
"Tell me, did you send for him?"

Redway spoke. "He has some reason for asking. Tell him, Jenkins."

"Not yet," said the coach.

"Then don't bother. Whatever's wrong with Bartley's arm can be settled right in this building."

The coach crossed the room noiselessly,



“He found Jenkins and the captain talking earnestly.”

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looked out into the hall and then locked the door.

“Keep your voice down,” he ordered. “What is it?”

Hastily the third baseman told his story. Starting with the fact that Kennedy and Bartley had both pitched for Warwick High, he related how the freshman had suddenly ceased speaking about Kennedy the night of the cane rush, and how he had since avoided discussing Kennedy’s record at the High School. He reminded Jenkins that the day the baseball candidates gathered at the cage and registered, the sophomore had said that Bartley had been favored by the High School coach.

“I remember that,” said Jenkins. “Go on.”

Then the boy told of the rage into which Kennedy had fallen the afternoon Bartley corrected his slow ball. As a fitting climax, Curtis told of that night he saw Bartley come white-faced from Kennedy’s room.

“I never told him I saw him that night,” Curtis said. “He doesn’t know I’m here. But he has not been the same pitcher since that

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night. A day later his arm got mysteriously out of gear. I think you'll find that Kennedy is at the bottom of all this trouble."

Jenkins was sorting a batch of time-tables he had taken from his pocket as Curtis ceased speaking. He did not find what he wanted quickly enough.

"What's the first train out of here in the morning, going north?" he asked. "Anybody know? Or are you fellows ever out of bed early enough in the morning to know that there is a morning train?"

Redway looked up. "Something after five o'clock, I think. Where are you going?"

"To Warwick," said the coach.

CHAPTER VIII

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

JENKINS left St. Mary's on Thursday. For two days the nine practiced under Redway's instructions, and wondered what had become of the coach. Bartley thought he had gone to Chicago for the specialist, and was sick at heart. Only Redway and Curtis could have told where Jenkins was, and they kept their lips sealed.

On Saturday the coach returned. He went to Redway's room, and sent for Curtis.

"I think I talked to half the population of Warwick," he announced.

"What did you hear?" questioned Redway.

"Nothing."

"Didn't you learn anything at all?" demanded Curtis in total surprise.

"Well," said the coach, "I did learn something. I found that Kennedy was Warwick

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High's star pitcher until our friend Bartley entered the school."

"And then?" asked Redway.

"Then Bartley was sent in to pitch the season's big game. Kennedy kicked up a row, and took himself to Lansing Academy. From Lansing he came to St. Mary's."

"What else?" insisted the captain of the nine.

"That's all," said the coach.

Curtis now took up the questioning. "Was Bartley's cousin the school coach?"

Jenkins nodded.

"Did he give Bartley the best of it?"

"I think not. I spoke to many of the boys who had been students in Bartley's time. They all agreed that he could pitch rings around Kennedy when he was right."

Curtis sighed in satisfaction. "Well, that proves the case," he said.

"What proves the case?" demanded Jenkins.

"Why, what you've just told us. Bartley ousted Kennedy at Warwick High and Kennedy deserted the school in disgust. Now Bart-

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

ley comes here and Kennedy finds him a dangerous rival. Kennedy expected to fill Turner's shoes this year, and then found that Bartley might take this honor from him. Bartley is the better pitcher. Kennedy knows it. You know it, Redway—you've batted against them both. Did Kennedy ever have you swinging foolishly at the ball? You can now see, Jenkins, the reason for the answer Kennedy gave when you asked him whether Bartley was good at Warwick. It's as plain as the nose on your face."

"But it doesn't account for all that has happened," said the coach mildly. "You're very enthusiastic, my boy, but your argument doesn't account."

"For what?" demanded the third baseman.

"For Bartley's reversal of form. What has Warwick High got to do with Bartley pitching his best ball for St. Mary's?"

There was silence. The three in Redway's room heard Kennedy's voice come up from the lower hall.

"I give it up," said Curtis at last. "But

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mark me, Jenkins, Kennedy's at the bottom of this. I'm going to watch him hereafter."

"So am I," said the coach.

The Warwick trip was a disappointment to Curtis. He had been certain that Jenkins would return with the mystery solved. Now the mystery was no nearer a solution than it was before. However, the third baseman found one ray of satisfaction. The coach had been aroused. Kennedy would be watched.

True to his word, the coach thereafter followed the star pitcher's every movement while the sophomore was on the field. Soon Kennedy became conscious of the surveillance. It annoyed and irritated him. Then he found Curtis also watching him—Curtis, Bartley's roommate.

"Did Bartley tell him anything?" he asked in sudden, wild alarm.

When his fear departed he reasoned that this could not be. Had Bartley spoken, he would have heard from Jenkins before this, for such a story would surely have carried to the coach, and the coach was not a man who wasted words.

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

The sophomore had begun to feel many twinges of conscience at the part he had played in dealing with Bartley. But he resolutely thrust regrets to one side. The freshman's unexplainable falling off had again made Kennedy the campus lion; he was once more the pride of the school. The students openly called him the only hope for the Rockton game. The freshmen now stared at him as he passed. What else mattered?

The Warwick trip led the coach, after much thought, to decide to take a desperate chance. He did not send for the Chicago specialist. Instead, trusting in his heart that there was nothing wrong with the freshman's arm, he resolved to send him in against Sinclair. Sinclair was stronger than any of the colleges St. Mary's had yet faced. The coach did not believe that any circumstance would induce Bartley deliberately to throw a game. Anyhow, it would be a test. It would give him a real line on the freshman's condition.

"You pitch against Sinclair Saturday," he told the boy.

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The freshman's eyes opened wide. "I pitch?"

"Yes. I guess you're all right now."

The coach's manner was care-free, but his heart was in his throat. He watched the boy accept the order in silence. Then he breathed easier. The boy had not pleaded that his arm was still lame. Jenkins found hope in that.

Half an hour later the coach told Kennedy that Bartley was to pitch the Sinclair game. Kennedy's face reflected blank amazement. In a moment he caught himself and tried to hide his surprise and disappointment.

"Isn't Bartley out of condition?" he asked.

"Lame arm," said Jenkins.

Kennedy all along had understood only too well the real reason for the freshman's sudden loss of power, but he had wondered how Bartley had managed it. Jenkins's answer told him.

"Isn't it risky to send in Bartley?" he asked.

"I don't think so."

"But he has a lame arm, and Sinclair has been killing the ball ever since the season opened."

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

“Do you know,” said the coach confidentially, “I don’t think Bartley’s arm is as lame as he thinks it is?”

Kennedy didn’t know it, and he found it disquieting news. He walked off thoughtfully and began throwing the ball aimlessly.

Jenkins, watching him closely, saw him studiously work his way over to where Bartley was working out with Murray.

Kennedy waited until Bartley called out that he had had enough. As soon as Murray walked away the star pitcher turned toward the freshman.

“Do you know you’ll be sent in for the Sinclair game next Saturday?”

“Yes.”

“I wanted that assignment.”

“I didn’t ask for it,” said Bartley.

Kennedy bit his lips. “It’s the first of the big games,” he said. “You know what I want. What are you going to do?”

“Oh, I’ll not keep you out of the limelight,” said the freshman wearily. “Don’t worry. I’ll only pitch to win. If we score big I’ll let them

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score. If they hold us, I'll do my best to hold them."

The answer was not entirely satisfactory to the sophomore. If the game were close Bartley might have to pitch his best. That could easily prove dangerous, for it might lead the coach to believe that Bartley, even with a lame arm, was a top-notch boxman. But Kennedy had to be satisfied with the answer. He dared not push the freshman too hard.

The coach, while he had not heard a word of this dialogue, had not missed a single expression that had shown on the faces of the boys.

"Kennedy holds the secret of Bartley's weakness," he said with conviction. At last he felt certain of his ground.

Bartley wondered why the specialist did not come from Chicago. Each day he awoke fearful, and each night he went to bed thankful that he had not had to face the ordeal. At last he spoke to Curtis, but the third baseman gave him no enlightenment.

"Maybe they're waiting to see how I show up in the Sinclair game," said Bartley.

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

“Maybe,” Curtis agreed.

Jenkins had picked Bartley for the game, in the hope that his arm was right. Before the sixth inning of the game the coach knew at last that something was certainly wrong. Sinclair had scored 6 runs, and St. Mary's had scored 7. There had been innings when the attempts of the heavy-hitting Sinclair batters to touch Bartley's delivery had been laughable, and had drawn roars of cheers and jibes from the students in the stands. But there had also been innings when Sinclair had slaughtered whatever the freshman pitcher sent up. Whenever St. Mary's scored, the next inning would see the rival school come within a run of tying. But always Sinclair trailed behind.

After the eighth inning the coach leaned over toward Murray, who was catching the game.

“How is he?”

“Unsteady,” said the catcher. “Maybe he's afraid to use his arm. In the pinches he's great—same old break to the ball. But as soon as we go ahead he seems to slow up, and he's

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that way until they get dangerous. Then he tightens."

The coach glanced sharply at Kennedy. The sophomore, cap down over his eyes, his arms folded, leaned back on the bench with contentment written all over his face.

St. Mary's, after almost causing heart failure among the students in the stands, won by a score of 10 to 8. At that, the students left the stands in gloom. If Sinclair could score eight runs, what would Rockton do?

The coach, however, was not yet worrying about the Rockton game. There were weightier things on his mind. Lounging in the gym, he waited until Bartley came out from under the showers.

"Arm any better?" he asked.

"A—a little."

"Think I need send for that Chicago specialist?"

"No," said the boy, a bit too hastily.

Once Kennedy had been glad that Murray was always the last boy to leave. Now Jenkins rejoiced in the fact of the catcher's slowness.

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

When they were alone the coach turned to the backstop.

"Murray," he said, "I want truthful answers to the questions I ask. How did Bartley impress you to-day?"

"He had me guessing," said the boy.

"Aside from the pinches, when they were a run or so behind, did he give you the impression that he was trying?"

The catcher hung his head. He had a sincere liking for the freshman pitcher.

"Did he, Murray?"

"No, sir," said the boy reluctantly. "He did not."

"That's all," said the coach. "Keep this to yourself, Murray."

Jenkins believed he had at last solved the problem. As he saw it, Kennedy had some hold on Bartley, and the freshman wanted to quit. Bartley, the coach reasoned, had purposely pitched a poor game, so as to bar himself from playing in the games to come. As Jenkins saw it, Bartley was cold-bloodedly leaving the college, just as the big games started, with only

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one reliable pitcher. To the coach this was treason.

He growled something down in the depths of his throat, and started for Redway's room. He was thoroughly aroused now. He'd have it out with Bartley and have it over with. The freshman would play real ball or—— Well, neither St. Mary's nor the nine had any use for a boy with a yellow streak.

Redway was studying when Jenkins threw open the door.

"Get Bartley," was the coach's greeting; "bring him here at once."

Something in the coach's voice told the captain of the nine that the storm was about to break. He had found encouragement in the fact that the freshman had lasted out the game, and he questioned the wisdom of starting any trouble.

"Don't go too fast," he began.

"Get Bartley," said Jenkins. "He wasn't trying to-day. I know it."

Striving desperately to smother his rage, the coach waited. At last the freshman, with



“ ‘St. Mary’s has no use for a quitter. . . . You are dismissed from the nine.’ ”

JENKINS IS PUZZLED

the captain of the nine at his heels, came slowly into the room. The coach waited until the door was closed.

“Bartley,” he said, “our schedule calls for five more games. I had planned to work you in two of them. If I decide to pitch you, will you give me your best, or will you half throw the game, as you did to-day?”

The freshman groped blindly for some reply. “My arm——” he began lamely.

Jenkins jumped to his feet. Redway, feeling that this was the finish, leaned across his desk.

“Enough of this,” cried the coach. “I believe your arm is as strong as mine. St. Mary’s has no use for a quitter, and I believe you tried to quit to-day. You are dismissed from the nine.”

“Jenkins!”

“You heard me. You’re a quitter. You’re dismissed.”

“Jenkins!” The boy’s voice was high-pitched. “Jenkins, I’m no quitter. I’m loyal. You don’t understand. I can’t help it. I——”

Suddenly he stopped. The arm he had raised

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in appeal fell to his side. The coach saw the misery in his eyes.

“Don’t forget,” said Redway quietly, “that he took Curtis out for batting work the morning of that last practise game. You know who he pitched against that afternoon.”

The coach remembered. No; it could not be disloyalty. Looking at Bartley as he pondered, he banished all thoughts of the yellow streak. There was this about Jenkins: his anger might blind him for the moment, but when that moment passed he was just and fair again.

Bartley turned forlornly toward the door.

“Remember,” said Redway again as though he feared the coach was hesitating.

Jenkins put a hand on the freshman pitcher’s shoulder. “I was hasty, Bartley. Forget what I said. Report to-morrow.”

When the door closed the coach faced the captain of the nine.

“Redway,” he raged, “I’m going to get at the bottom of this before I stop, and when I do somebody’ll sweat.”

CHAPTER IX

BARTLEY REVOLTS

JENKINS decided, after he had studied the scene in Redway's room by the light of another day, that he had made a serious mistake. He should have sent for Kennedy, the chief offender. Not that he could have bearded Kennedy. He realized that he could ill afford to have his star pitcher sulk so late in the season, and leave him without a boxman on whom he could rely. He felt that he should have sent for Kennedy and have put him on his honor. Then, if that failed—well, though the coach knew he could not take a chance of quarreling with Kennedy at this time, he was resolved that there would be a fine old washing of linen not many hours after the Rockton game.

However, Jenkins reasoned that it was not too late to put the sophomore on his honor.

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

When he next met the star pitcher on St. Mary's field he called Kennedy to him.

"Bartley's arm," he said, "has me guessing."

Kennedy was startled. "How—how so?" he demanded.

"It looks queer. I can't make head nor tail of it. I want you to look into this matter."

"You—you want me to——" Kennedy was stammering.

"Exactly," the coach broke in. "I want you to find out what ails him. When you learn, report to me."

The star pitcher nodded and slowly moved away. He looked bewildered.

For more than an hour Kennedy pondered this latest turn of affairs. Then he found Bartley alone and at once spoke of what was on his mind.

"The coach wants me to investigate that arm of yours," he began. "He told me to find out what ailed you and report. What will I tell him?"

The freshman suspected a trap—perhaps a

BARTLEY REVOLTS

trap for Kennedy. If the coach suspected his arm, what else might he not have surmised?

"Why not tell him the truth?" suggested Bartley quietly.

Kennedy reddened. "Do you know he has a strong idea that you're shamming?"

"Yes."

"You do, eh?" gasped the star pitcher in surprise. "Since when?"

"Since last night."

"What happened then?"

"Jenkins told me I had not been trying in the Sinclair game."

"What—what did you tell him?" asked Kennedy in a weak, trembling voice.

"Nothing," said Bartley.

There was silence for a long time. Finally Kennedy asked:

"What are you going to do now?"

"I don't know," said the freshman.

The star pitcher did not find this answer very reassuring. In fact, his baseball affairs were showing strong signs of becoming badly muddled.

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

Kennedy figured that two days was the least time it would take to make the investigation the coach had asked. So for two days he pretended to study Bartley closely whenever the freshman came on the field. At the end of that time the star pitcher went to the coach.

“Well?” questioned Jenkins. “Was I right? Isn’t there something queer in the case?”

“I don’t think so,” said Kennedy. “To my mind Bartley brought it on himself. It’s his own fault.”

“Then you think his arm is really lame?”

“Certainly.”

“Why?” asked the coach.

Kennedy was prepared, for he had expected such a question.

“I think,” he said slowly, “that he strained his arm pitching for effect early in the spring—that last practise game and the Orion game, you know.”

“As a matter of fact, wasn’t he very careful of his arm from the start?” asked Jenkins.

“I don’t know why I should think so,” flared the pitcher.

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“And you really think his arm is lame?”

“Yes.”

“That is all you have to say, Kennedy?”

“Yes.” The boy was fidgeting. “Did you expect a different answer?”

“I did,” said the coach, with sudden, unexpected sharpness. “That’s all.”

To the sophomore that reply sounded alarming. It was not what it said so much as what it suggested.

The boy wished he had never spoken to Bartley about the money. However, the season would be over in two weeks. He was resolved that next year he would keep his hands off and let Bartley fight out the question of supremacy on its merits.

Of late the sophomore passed many hours when he was depressed, and as against those, some few hours when he felt that it was good to be alive. These latter were the hours when he figured that he was to pitch the Rockton game.

But, despite the joy he got out of anticipating the glory of that struggle, he could not shake off the secret dread that hovered because

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the coach suspected that Bartley's arm was right. And there was always the fear that Jenkins would carry his investigations to a successful conclusion. Whenever the boy could conquer these dreads, the Rockton game was foremost in his mind. He took it to bed with him at night.

A baseball pitcher is not a machine. Usually he is a bundle of nerves, more so than any other member of the nine because he is continually in the thickest of the battle. Other players get minutes of rest between plays. Every ball the pitcher delivers is a tax on nerves and arm.

The emotions under which Kennedy labored began to sap a vital something that as a pitcher he needed. All at once he became erratic, and then there were two heart-breaking twirlers on the St. Mary's staff.

Redway, who caught Kennedy almost exclusively, saw it first, and straightway carried the news to the coach. Jenkins at once suspected the source of the weakness.

"Is he bad?" he asked Redway.

"Not much better than Bartley in the Sin-

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clair game," was the reply, "and Bartley wasn't even trying."

"We're going to pieces fast," the coach told himself gloomily. "A month ago we had Rockton hopelessly beaten; now I wouldn't give a counterfeit ten-cent piece for our chances. Wait until this season ends. There'll be a fine old reckoning before I close the books."

The coach, for the first time since he came to St. Mary's, was planning vengeance.

If Jenkins was sick at heart, Bartley was no less so. The freshman pitcher felt that the coach had done him a wonderful kindness that night in Redway's room in not dismissing him from the nine; he worried because there was no way, to his mind, in which he could repay it. Even yet he looked on Kennedy's demand as binding on him. He bowed to it as to an obligation. Was not the Kennedy money giving him an education—a chance to go out into the world better equipped than his father had been?

But he had decided in his misery that this would be his first year and also his last year

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at St. Mary's. Next fall he would enter some school farther west, where there would be no Kennedy to throttle his loyalty. He would enter a college that did not play St. Mary's, for he was resolved that he would never pitch against the blue and gold. He felt that he had already harmed St. Mary's enough.

Long before this, Curtis had come to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by watching Kennedy. So he took to studying Bartley.

Curtis was in the room the night Redway came for the freshman pitcher, and the third baseman had watched Bartley come back again white and shaky. Bartley had not told him what had happened, and he asked no questions.

Finally, though he could not explain why, Curtis reached his own conclusions.

"Jenkins is a pretty good fellow," he ~~and~~ said one night, with assumed carelessness.

"He's white," said Bartley simply.

After a while the third baseman picked up his cap, went up the stairs to Redway's room and there found the coach.

"If you need Bartley put him in," he said.

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"After the game he pitched against Sinclair," scoffed the coach.

"Put him in," insisted Curtis. "He'll work his head off for you."

"Did he tell you so?" demanded Jenkins.

"No," answered Curtis. "As a matter of fact, I don't think he knows it himself. But put him to the test, and he'll surely make good for you."

Something in the boy's manner convinced the coach. Jenkins smiled. It was the best news he had heard in many days. But even as the smile came it died.

"Too late," he said. "He's out of shape; he hasn't had enough work."

"Try him," pleaded Curtis. "He takes good care of himself. He's in better shape than we think."

And so the Marshall game, second in importance only to the Rockton game, came on, and Kennedy went in to pitch it.

Bartley had expected to pitch this game. He sat dumbly in a corner of the bench and stared across the warm, sun-lit field. True, the coach

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had not disgraced him by dismissing him from the nine, but he felt that Jenkins would never again send him out to work for the blue and gold.

The crowds in the stands sent up a wild cheer when Kennedy marched out to start the game. Kennedy had not lost a contest since the season started. They had faith in him. A group of sophomores stood up and barked a joyous greeting.

The stands did not know that on the bench Jenkins was biting his lips anxiously, and that Redway, crouched silently behind the bat, was hoping that the star pitcher would pull through the game without mishap.

In the first two innings, by effective hitting, St. Mary's scored six runs, and drove the first Marshall pitcher to cover.

That gave Kennedy a decided advantage—an advantage that he sadly needed. He had worried so much lately that he was in no condition to stand the strain of a hard game.

Marshall, though, was not yet beaten. Fighting an up-hill battle, they kept doggedly peck-

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ing away at Kennedy's delivery. Soon they were hitting safely with more or less uncomfortable frequency. The stands, however, took the exhibition as a rare bit of work on Kennedy's part.

"He's keeping the hits scattered," they kept shouting, and cheered Kennedy again and again.

Jenkins kept biting anxiously at his lips. He feared the time when those scattered hits would begin to come in clusters.

In the fourth inning Marshall got two men on the bases, but luck was with Kennedy, and no runs went across the plate. In the fifth inning three men were on the bags, but a whirlwind double play saved St. Mary's.

Walking in from his place behind the plate, Redway nodded to the coach.

"Weakening," he said.

Jenkins shook his head hopelessly.

With his hands clenched, the coach sat motionless and watched Marshall score twice in the sixth inning on clean hitting. He felt that it was the beginning of the end. Yet when

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Kennedy came in from the pitcher's box, Jenkins smiled at the sophomore.

"You can afford to have one bad inning, Lightning. Go right back at them. You're their master every minute."

Kennedy gnawed at his finger-nails, and said not a word. The coach's words were lost on him. He was losing his grip. What was worse, he knew it.

Yet, he walked out at the beginning of the seventh inning with his head held high. The coach, watching him, was not deceived.

To Jenkins, that seventh inning was a nightmare. The first ball that Kennedy pitched was proof to the coach that he was gone. The batter caught it on the nose, and raced to third base on the smash. After that hit after hit tore to the outfield, and while the coach breathed with a mighty effort, three Marshall players scurried across the plate and a small delegation of Marshall students threatened to split their throats.

The coach begged silently for the slaughter to end. Twice the outfield got vicious line drives

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after hard runs. Then, with two eager runners on the bases, Curtis made a desperate stop and throw, and got his man at first base for the third out.

After that the coach breathed easier again. The agony was over. St. Mary's was still one run to the good.

As Curtis made his play, the coach glanced over at Bartley. Then he fell to studying the freshman. Curtis had said he would pitch his head off. Jenkins deliberated. Suddenly the coach spoke sharply:

"Go in next inning, Bartley."

The freshman slowly stiffened. It did not seem real that Jenkins should trust him with this game.

"You mean that, Jenkins?"

The eyes of the man met the eyes of the boy.

"Yes," said Jenkins.

When the star pitcher sank down wearily in his place on the bench the coach spoke once more.

"That's enough for you, Kennedy."

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"I'm tired," said the sophomore listlessly.
"Who's going to pitch?"

"Bartley."

This time it was Kennedy who stiffened.
"Who?" he asked, as though he could not realize it.

"Bartley," said the coach again. Then he jabbed intentionally: "I don't think he'll have any trouble holding them."

Kennedy's fingers twitched. The Rockton game was but ten days off. If Bartley should go in and check Marshall, after the way he had been hit, should hold them——

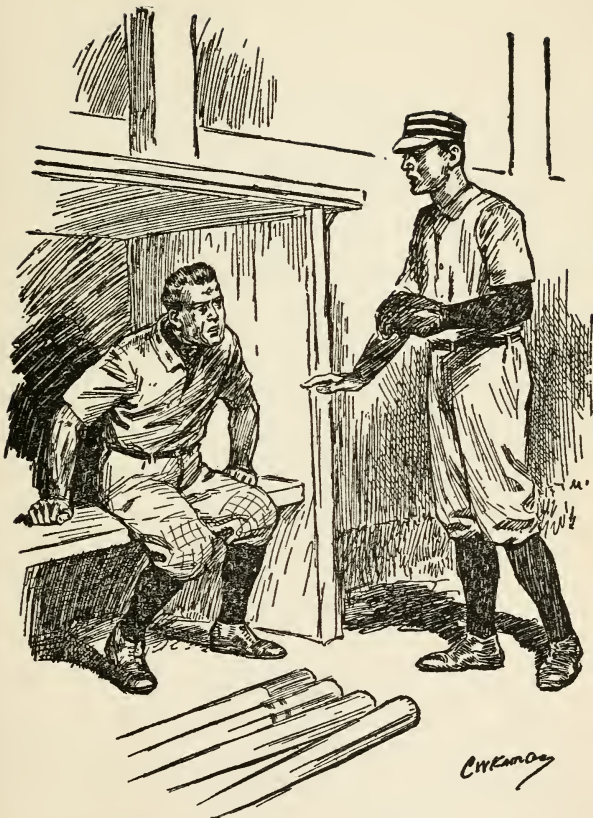
He felt the freshman, sitting next to him, pulling off his jacket sweater.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely. "I want to know what you're going to do."

"Pitch," said Bartley.

"They hammered me. You're not supposed to be in shape. If they pound you all over the lot——"

The freshman was staring at him. "What do you mean?"



“ ‘I’ll pitch to win. . . . To win, do you hear?’ ”

BARTLEY REVOLTS

“Just what I say. You’re not supposed to be in shape, and if they hit you——”

“You—you want me to throw this game?”

“Yes.”

Bartley stood up, stretched his arms and reached in under the roof of the bench for his glove. Kennedy crouched forward.

“Well?”

“I’ll pitch to win,” said Bartley passionately. “To win, do you hear?”

CHAPTER X

KENNEDY'S HOPES CRUMBLE

IT dawned on Kennedy, as he sat on the bench with Jenkins and the substitutes, and watched Bartley go out to pitch the first half of the eighth inning, that hereafter he could not hope to fill the mighty Turner's shoes at St. Mary's.

He was not a star pitcher, as the school since Turner's time had understood the term. He had been knocked out of the box. True, Turner had lost contests, but that was only when the men behind him had failed to hit. Turner had never been hammered from the slab. To-day St. Mary's had hit well, as those six runs testified, but the pitcher knew he had failed to hold the advantage.

Not even for one moment did the big sophomore hope that Bartley would be hit hard. In fact, he was too stunned to think or hope.

KENNEDY'S HOPES CRUMBLE

Taken from the box; taken from the box—and Bartley sent in to save the game.

Dully he watched the plays that followed—the stops, the throws, and scarcely heard the little squeaks of delight that came from the substitutes as Bartley stopped the Marshall rally.

When the last man was out, Murray shook him by the shoulder. He arose and walked to the gymnasium.

Jenkins, though, was keenly alive to every movement on the field. He did not study Bartley, but he kept his eyes on Redway's face. Once, twice the freshman pitched, as that eighth inning opened, and the coach saw a contented grin spread over Redway's mouth.

Jenkins knew what that meant. The freshman's arm was right. The coach leaned back and whistled a gay little snatch of college song.

Only three batters faced Bartley that inning. When he came in from the diamond and stooped over the water bucket, dipper in hand, Jenkins spoke without turning his head.

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

“Don’t drink much water. Just rinse your mouth.”

“Why?” asked the boy.

“Water makes you loggy. You’ll lose your ginger. Great work, boy. Keep it up.”

Bartley sat down without looking at Kennedy, and the sophomore made no sign that he saw his rival.

When the freshman had stalked out to open the eighth inning, the stands had remained almost silent. Disquieting rumors of Bartley’s condition had traveled far. But when he came out to pitch the ninth inning those same stands arose as one man and barked joyously:

“Bartley! Bartley! Bartley!”

The freshman class danced deliriously in the limited space of their section.

“It takes a freshie to do it,” they kept chanting.

That last inning opened badly. The first boy up hit straight at Curtis, and the third baseman fumbled. As he dove for the ball to recover it, Redway shouted:

“Don’t throw!”

KENNEDY'S HOPES CRUMBLE

The captain of the nine had seen that there was no chance of getting the runner, and did not wish Curtis to run the chances of a wild throw.

The next batter bunted an intended sacrifice. Curtis swooped in on the ball and again fumbled. When he stood up with the ball at last both runners were safe.

Holding the white sphere, Curtis walked toward the box. His face told his misery.

"It's all right," smiled Bartley. "Take your time; you're too anxious."

The pitcher spoke the truth. Curtis was anxious—anxious to see his room-mate win.

And then, in the pinch, Redway signalled again and again for that in-drop. With deliberate regularity it broke and dipped across the inside corner of the plate. One batter struck out without even touching the ball. The next boy sent a high, twisting foul into the air. Curtis was after the ball in a flash.

"Take your time," called Bartley. "Lots of time."

"Easy, now; easy, now," Redway coaxed.

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

Curtis caught it near the bleacher fence, and held to it with a clutch that was pathetic to see.

“All right, Dick,” he called. “Two down; get the next man, Dick.”

The next batter came up scowling and watchful, for the Marshall coach had impressed upon his mind that the game was up to him. Redway quickly signalled for that marvelous drop, but Bartley, studying the batter, shook his head. He felt that the Marshall batter had been told to watch for just that ball.

Redway instantly divined what was passing in Bartley's mind. He signalled for a fast ball on the outside corner and up around the shoulders. The outfielders noted the signal and casually moved back, the center fielder also shifting a bit toward the left fielder, for it had been noticed earlier in the game that this batter pulled the ball toward left field when he hit. The outer gardeners moved back because when a high, fast ball on the outside corner is hit fairly it travels far.

Hardy, playing a deep field, did not have to move to catch the soaring fly that traveled from

KENNEDY'S HOPES CRUMBLE

the Marshall boy's bat. Then it was that Murray shook Kennedy by the shoulder.

"It's all over," he said gleefully.

Kennedy, rousing himself, became conscious of a hearty, booming chant that all the stands seemed taking up:

"It takes a freshie to do it! It takes a freshie to do it!"

Later, when the shower bath had brought back his wits, he asked Murray to tell him what had happened in those last two innings.

"Four strike-outs, and nothing that even looked like a hit," said Murray.

The star pitcher frowned at the enthusiasm that sounded in the catcher's voice.

"It's all up with me," he muttered. "That's the end."

In his heart there was a burning sense of shame. He had asked the freshman pitcher to throw a game—to play the traitor to the school. Though the day was warm, the boy shivered. The freshman's glance of scorn had chilled him through. It was that certain something that stirs in a boy who is doing a mean thing when

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

he is brought face to face with an honest boy's contempt.

The gymnasium rocked with laughter while the nine dressed. The coach joked gayly with the boys around him. He could afford to joke now, for there was a vast load off his mind. Bartley was still in form; the freshman would pitch good ball for him.

"You were right," he told Curtis, and the third baseman understood.

"I knew he would do it if you sent him in, Jenkins."

Kennedy took no part in the happy talk that sounded around him. It is doubtful if he even heard half of it. He finished dressing, and silently went out through the gym door. Hardy stared after him.

"Knocked out of the box," he said thoughtfully, "for the first time. He feels it, boys."

The coach changed the subject.

The sophomore did not go to his room. Instead, he forlornly walked the almost deserted streets of the little college town. He did not know until now how much the honor of pitching



C. W. KAMEE

“He saw that a great fire had been lighted on the campus.”

KENNEDY'S HOPES CRUMBLE

the Rockton game meant to him. In his keen disappointment over the day's showing, he did not want to meet any of the other students.

Night had fallen when he at last turned his footsteps toward the school buildings. As he approached the campus, he saw that a great fire had been lighted on the campus, and that around this the students were gathered. It was the fire of victory, and he grew sullen at the thought of how small had been his share in the result. Keeping well out of the reflection of light thrown by the burning wood, he watched and waited.

Soon the students began to cheer the members of the nine, one by one.

"What's the matter with Bartley?" demanded a voice.

"He's all right," boomed the answer, and then a rattle of cheers. In the midst of the uproar Kennedy could hear the shrill pipe of a voice:

"It takes a freshie to do it."

A roar of laughter came from the juniors and the seniors, and even the sophomores could

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

not suppress a smile. But Kennedy shut his mouth with a scowl.

“They’ll be telling their grandchildren,” he growled, “how a freshman saved a game, I suppose.”

“What’s the matter with Hardy?” demanded another voice.

“He’s all right,” rang out the answer, and some more cheers.

Kaufman, Curtis, Redway, Jenkins—all the nine came in for sweeping cheers. Sometimes a boy was cheered three or four times. Suddenly Kennedy heard what he had been waiting for:

“What’s the matter with Lightning, fellows?”

“He’s all right. Rah! Rah! Rah! Oh, you Kennedy!”

The pitcher kept out of the fire-light, and went into Winslow Hall by the back way. They had given him the cheer, but somehow it lacked the ring that had sounded in the shouts for the other members of the nine. The boy’s face burned. No; he was no longer a star. He had

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been hammered from the box. Turner had never been taken from a game.

It stung him to think that the Warwick Daily *Pioneer*, his home newspaper, would print the fact that he had been hit hard by Marshall. In his vain pride he had written to his friends in Warwick of the record he was making, and of his certainty of pitching the Rockton game. When he had written the letter the Rockton assignment had seemed sure. Now—— Oh, he *must* pitch that game.

Next day he received a letter from his father. One paragraph of the missile burned into his brain:

“I have read an account of the game. I somehow feel that you are suffering with nobody to advise you. However, you must not forget that you have two more years at college, and that there will be many more games. Defeat should not sting much if you have made an honest fight. I know you have done that.”

An honest fight! And he had asked Bartley to throw the game. Somehow, the word honor seemed to be always before his eyes.

The boy was closer to a grand victory than

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he knew. But his pride, shaken, tottering, still managed to hold. He had gone this far; he reasoned that he might as well go on to the end. It was only for a few more days, anyway. After that the Rockton game would pass into school history, with its victory or defeat.

He would have trembled had he known the plans of the coach, once the season came to an end. His ignorance of what was in Jenkins's mind allowed this strange drama of baseball to play itself to a finish.

Kennedy wanted to have one more interview with Bartley. Something told him it would be the last time he would go to the freshman asking favors for the Kennedy dollars. Yet, remembering the look that had flashed in Bartley's eyes just after the freshman stood up to go out to pitch that eighth inning of the Marshall game, he shrank from such an interview.

Finally, however, by sheer force of will, he strangled his fear and went to the freshman's room.

He found Bartley alone, with his books spread

KENNEDY'S HOPES CRUMBLE

out before him. He had come to appeal, not to demand, and found that even the appeal stuck in his throat.

“What is it?” asked Bartley at last. “Is your pride outraged because I would not throw the game?”

There was sarcasm in Bartley’s voice. Kennedy felt the sting of the words.

“I’m glad you didn’t throw the game,” he said weakly, at last. “I should never have asked it. I must have been mad.”

“Then what brings you here?”

“You—you may be sent in against Rockton.”

The freshman stared straight ahead. Kennedy waited a while. Then he found courage to blurt out:

“I want to pitch that game, Bartley. I’ll ask for no favors next year. We’ll fight it out on its merits after the big game.

“I’m not coming back next year,” said Bartley.

Another long silence. Then:

“What—what will you tell Jenkins if he wants to send you in?” asked Kennedy.

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

“I’ll tell him nothing,” said the freshman.
“What can I tell him?”

“What will you do?”

“I’ll pitch. Don’t!” cried Bartley. “I want to be fair to you; I’ve tried to be fair all along. But now I have made up my mind. I must be true to St. Mary’s.”

As Kennedy walked down the hall, the Rockton game suddenly ceased to be the greatest thing in the world. He had seen a loyalty that was far finer—had seen it in the freshman’s room.

CHAPTER XI

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY

JENKINS'S joy as a coach, over the brand of ball Bartley had pitched in the Marshall game, was short lived. As a man, he felt a lasting joy in the fact that the boy had redeemed himself.

As a coach, he began to realize that he was no better off than before. True, Bartley had come back to form, but, on the other hand, Kennedy had gone stale. That was another score Jenkins felt he would have to settle with the sophomore. First the star pitcher, for some reason, had forced Bartley to feign a lame arm; then he had himself gone out of condition.

"He'll never pitch another game for me," grumbled the coach, as he dwelt on the wrong that had been done to the blue and gold.

There were two more games still to be played—the game with Stevenson and the game with

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the ancient enemy, Rockton. The coach knew that it would be impossible for Bartley to work in both. Two games a week do not tell on a professional pitcher, but they sadly strain a growing boy of seventeen years. No; Bartley could not work in both.

Vainly the coach tried to figure a way out of the difficulty. He dared not experiment with any of the three boys who had tried to make the nine and had failed. These boys had continued to practice daily, hoping that some day a call for their services would come. What could he do?

Then Kennedy came humbly to the coach—Kennedy, who, before this, had arrogantly accepted all honors as only his just due.

“I think I’m in shape again,” he said. “My arm feels as strong as it ever felt. May I pitch the Stevenson game?”

“No,” said the coach.

“But my arm is strong again. Call Redway aside and let him try me out. Let me show you.”

“I gave you my answer, Kennedy.”



“ ‘Jenkins,’ he said huskily, ‘give me a chance.’ ”

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY

“Will you tell me why you won’t let me pitch?”

“No.” That would come later—after the Rockton game had been played.

“Are you pounding me for failing in one game? Isn’t every pitcher liable to have a bad day?”

The coach did not answer. Instead, after a while, he moved away toward the gym.

The boy felt the blow keenly. He felt that he was being treated worse than a substitute, and all, as he saw it, because, since Turner’s time, the school was not accustomed to having star pitchers pounded to a pulp.

“Jenkins,” he said huskily, plucking at the coach’s sleeve, “give me a chance. I’ll throw my arm out to win. Just give me a chance.”

Jenkins was a man whose heart was at times too big. The boy’s plea, despite what he knew and what he suspected, touched him. He had dismissed Bartley from the nine, he remembered, and had then taken Bartley back, and Bartley had made good. Perhaps it was better to give Kennedy also a chance. Then again,

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if he turned the sophomore aside, whom else did he have?

“See Bartley,” he said at last.

The boy’s face reflected his astonishment. “What for?” he asked.

“He’s earned the right to pitch that game. I’ve practically told him he’d go in.”

It was all gall and wormwood to Kennedy, but he swallowed the dose manfully. He was a changed boy within the last twenty-four hours.

Leaving the coach, he walked slowly to where Bartley was lounging on the grass of St. Mary’s field, outside the base lines.

“I’ve asked the coach to let me pitch the Stevenson game,” the sophomore began. “He told me to see you; that he had practically told you you’d work.”

The freshman studied Kennedy. “Go in,” he said finally; “I hope you win.”

“I—I’m pitching for something bigger,” said the sophomore slowly.

“You’re pitching for St. Mary’s.”

“I’m pitching,” said Kennedy, “in a last

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY effort to win the assignment for the Rockton game.”

“I hope you win from Stevenson,” said Bartley steadily.

Kennedy turned away. Something like mist clouded his sight.

The sophomore had resolved that for the rest of the season he would not hinder Bartley. Whoever pitched the Rockton game would do it because he deserved the job.

Bartley had shown form in the Marshall game. What was to hinder him, he asked himself, from showing form in the Stevenson game? There was a chance that the coach might even yet send him in against Rockton. Anyhow, the Stevenson game was his last chance to play for the Rockton assignment. Bartley must have known it, and yet Bartley allowed him to go in.

“He’s white,” said Kennedy at last, and the admission came with an effort.

The star pitcher had begun to lose the feeling that Bartley was under an obligation to him because of the mortgage loan. It had dawned on the boy’s consciousness that many persons

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deposited their money in the trust company of which his father was president. Yet his father, he knew, felt under no obligation to his depositors save the single duty of protecting the savings entrusted to his institution.

When Curtis heard that Bartley had surrendered the Stevenson assignment to Kennedy, he was the angriest boy in school. For a time he thought that his room-mate was once more deserting the blue and gold. In the end, however, common sense came to the rescue, and he reasoned that if Bartley were still under Kennedy's control he would not have pitched so strongly in the game against Marshall.

"Why did you let Kennedy go in?" Curtis demanded.

"He asked it," said Bartley. "You should have seen his face. He wanted the chance badly."

"But do you realize that this gives him a fine chance to win the assignment against Rockton?"

"I do."

"Well, will you tell me why you did it?"

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY

“He’s hurt because of his showing against Marshall,” said the freshman. “Now he’ll use his last ounce of strength to win this game. A pitcher with a determination as strong as that seldom loses. If I went in, there is a possibility that we might be beaten. Why risk the game?”

And while all three boys—Bartley, Curtis and Kennedy—were having a hand in the pitching problem, each actuated by a different motive, none knew the coach’s thoughts on the propriety of allowing his pitchers to work twice in seven days.

Because of Jenkins’s fear of straining his young pitchers, he sorely dreaded the Stevenson game. He was not at all certain that Kennedy would be able to stand the pace for nine innings. Suppose the sophomore should go to pieces and fail miserably? Suppose he had to send in Bartley? That latter supposition was quite probable after Kennedy’s showing against Marshall. If it proved a nip-and-tuck game, and both his pitchers had to go under fire, who would work against Rockton next Saturday?

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

There are times when a coach's life is not a particularly happy one.

Because of his secret dread, Jenkins tried mightily to give courage to the stalwart sophomore. While the stands were quivering with tension, and while his charges were climbing into their battle-scarred uniforms, he talked jovially to the star pitcher.

"You never looked better in your life, Lightning," he announced. "You look like a new man. Eyes clear, skin ruddy—— How do you feel?"

"Fine," said the boy.

"Sleep well last night? Nothing like a good night's rest."

"Like a top."

"You ought not to have much trouble to-day. Stevenson always shows up poorly against a right-hander."

The pitcher was putting on his shoes. "How's that?"

"Mostly right-handed batters this season, and they've been doing miserably against right-handers. Rockton trimmed them, 18 to 2. We

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY
beat Marshall. You noticed what Marshall did
to them, didn't you?"

"The score was 8 to 1, wasn't it?"

"Correct. You ought to have an easy time
of it.

"Oh, I'll win," said Kennedy.

The pitcher meant it, too. He knew that he
seemed to have lost a certain snap, but he de-
pended on the strength he could call to his aid.
He had gone through games last year when he
had not felt much better than he did to-day, so
far as his skill was concerned, and had won.
What he did not realize was the mental differ-
ence. Last year he had had no strain on his
mind. Then Turner had been king; he had not
spent restless days and nights with his thoughts
turned on the Rockton game.

He took up his work in the box with a care-
free smile. Nevertheless, the first few innings
passed anxiously for the coach. Then Redway
eased Jenkins's mind.

"He's got everything he ever had," said the
catcher. "Why, that slow ball of his is a reve-
lation. It has them standing on their heads."

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

The coach had spoken truly—Stevenson was weak at the bat against right-handed pitchers. But it sent in a twirler who was having an uncommonly good day. He put the ball wherever he wanted it to go, and it broke, bent and jumped at his will. Kennedy, closely studying his rival's delivery, knew that it was going to be a battle. Jenkins, watching the other pitcher, knew it too.

“Don't let up for a minute, Lightning,” he ordered. “Keep right at it.”

“I'll win,” said the boy doggedly.

In the fifth inning the Stevenson infield slipped a cog. Redway singled, and the Stevenson catcher messed up Kennedy's intended sacrifice. Then Curtis's hit to short went through the infielder's hands, and Redway raced home with the first run of the game.

It was only one run, a slim advantage. This time, though, Kennedy meant to hold what he had.

He knew that he was tiring, but he gritted his teeth and held on, feeling that the Rockton game was at stake.

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY

There are games when a pitcher can ease up with none on the bases and trust to the seven athletes playing alertly in the field behind him. Then there are games when he feels that the least let-up may spell quick and certain disaster. And so Kennedy put his best into every ball he pitched.

He showed the strain. On the bench he became listless. Before the seventh inning his face had lost its healthful flush and had gone bluish white. The coach, sharply observant at all times, was quick to notice the change.

“Is the going too hard?” he asked.

“No,” said Kennedy; “I’m all right.”

After what had happened in the Marshall game could he confess to the coach that he was now pitching only on his nerve—that all else was gone?

The stands arose and cheered him between the innings. The sound left no thrill. For once he cared not one whit for the rousing uproar that ended each time with his name. He was deaf to it all. He was so tired!

When he came in to the bench he dropped

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

back on the wooden seat and closed his eyes to the game. When he had to go out on the diamond he prayed for the inning to come to an end.

The last two innings he pitched with a lump in his throat. Each time he threw the ball he felt that it was not possible to pitch again, but always he wound up and plunked the ball into Redway's mitt with precision. He was using the slow ball almost entirely now, trusting that Stevenson would not awake in time to slaughter the offering. And the Stevenson batters were swinging and lunging desperately, without driving the ball out of the diamond.

When the last batter of the rival school struck vainly for the last time, the boy dropped his arm to his side and sighed. St. Mary's had won by a score of 1 to 0. He had given Stevenson but three scattered singles.

Kennedy knew that he had done nobly, but his steps were weary as he went to the gym. The coach attributed his now apparent listlessness to the strain of a hard game.

"They'll be celebrating the victory to-night,"

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY
said Jenkins. "But you keep to your room and get to bed early. You've had all the excitement you can digest for one day."

When the boy came from under the shower Jenkins massaged his muscles. The boy stretched his arms luxuriously. How good it felt. Lying at full length on a hard bench, he thought it would be happiness just to stay there and drop off to sleep.

As he dressed he revived a bit, cheered by the fact that he had won handily. There was now no reason why he should not be sent in against Rockton—no reason except that his sturdy right arm was cruelly tired, tired, tired. He brushed the thought aside.

Kennedy left the gymnasium with Redway. As they reached the street, the last of the crowd that had attended the game had vanished, and the ground-tender was closing the gates.

"It will soon be over," said the pitcher.

Redway nodded silently. He had worried before every game since the season opened. Now he was worrying over the Rockton game. That

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was the price he paid for being captain of the nine.

"You always do your best against Rockton," said Kennedy a trifle enviously. He was thinking of his arm.

"I may not catch the Rockton game," said Redway.

The star pitcher thought he could not have heard aright. "What's that?" he demanded.

"If you pitch I'll go behind the bat," said Redway. "I've been catching you now for two years, and I know your delivery like a book. But if Bartley should pitch, I think I will send in Murray. Jenkins and I have talked it over many times in the last week or so. Murray's been handling Bartley all season. He understands him better than I do."

"Keep out of the big game?" gasped Kennedy in amazement.

"Yes."

"But you're the captain of the nine."

"Well, what of that?"

"You can play against Rockton if you want to."

REDWAY SHOWS KENNEDY THE WAY

“What difference does it make who plays?” demanded Redway impatiently. “The main thing is, St. Mary’s must win.”

Something clutched at Kennedy’s throat. For a moment he seemed to walk in darkness.

“Oh!” was all he said.

CHAPTER XII

THE AWAKENING

KENNEDY, after leaving Redway, went directly to his room. For a long time he sat staring at the flags of blue and gold on the walls. Some of the flags had dates under them, denoting the day and the year they had been waved in victory.

Sitting there, the pitcher at last spoke:

“I never thought of it that way before.”

The boy worked his arm, and, not satisfied, stood up and went through the motion of delivering a ball to the batter. The arm, the movements showed, was now undoubtedly sore. From a closet the boy took a bottle of alcohol and rubbed handfuls of the mixture from wrist to aching shoulder.

“That ought to ease it up,” he said. “Nice time for my arm to go lame.”

He was not hungry; he did not go out for

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dinner. Finally he turned out the light and went to bed.

In the morning he hesitatingly bared his arm over by the broad window and surveyed it critically and anxiously. A sudden hope flamed up when he found that it was neither puffed nor swollen. At last he went through the self-same pitching motions he had used gloomily the night before.

The jab of pain that ran up his arm twisted his mouth for an instant.

"It hurts," he groaned.

The muscles throbbed a bit when he stopped. He knew now what the hard-fought victory of the day before had cost him. The alcohol had not helped him in the least. So he gave the arm another rubbing, this time using witch hazel, and went off to recitations.

Crossing the campus, he met Bartley. He meant to hurry past, but the freshman stopped him.

"That was a great game you pitched yesterday, Kennedy. I didn't get a chance to speak to you in the gym. It was fine."

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"I thought they had me beaten once or twice," said the sophomore.

"Why," said Bartley in surprise, "you only gave them three hits."

"Did you ever pitch a game on your nerve?" asked Kennedy wistfully.

"No."

"Then you don't understand," and the sophomore said it as though he envied the freshman.

"Redway said that Turner never pitched a better game," insisted Bartley.

Kennedy tried to smile. It was a weak effort. With his arm throbbing painfully just before the Rockton game, he found it impossible to be joyful.

"I pitched the best I knew how," he said.

Once the big pitcher would have suspected some hidden motive if Bartley had spoken such praise. Last night, though, Redway had given him the key to much that he had not understood before. He recognized Bartley's speech for the true college loyalty that it really was.

When the sophomore got back to Winslow

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Hall he found the coach waiting for him on the steps of the building. So many surprising things had happened of late that Jenkins wanted to be prepared for any emergency. While he thought it suicide to work a boy in two big games in one week, he felt that it would do no harm to have Kennedy's arm in some sort of condition for Saturday.

"Feel all right?" he asked, remembering how the boy's muscles had twitched after yesterday's game.

"My arm is sore," said Kennedy. He would be honest from now on.

The coach took him upstairs. In Redway's room he rolled up the boy's sleeve, and for the second time that season anxiously surveyed a pitcher's arm. Though the boy had found no swelling, the practiced eyes of the coach saw the slight ridges that signified tortured muscles.

"Taking care of this?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What are you doing for it?"

"Rubbing it with witch hazel and alcohol."

"Keep that up. You needn't report to-day.

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Rest up. To-morrow I'll massage that arm thoroughly."

"Is it—is it in very bad shape, Jenkins?"

"Bad enough," was the answer.

Jenkins came away from Winslow Hall in a thoughtful mood. The boy had confessed that his arm was lame, and had been honest about it. What had worked such a change?

In his own room, Kennedy again tested that weary arm. He quickly realized that the improvement since morning was slight. There was still a pronounced creak at the elbow, as though the joint needed oiling, and the upper-arm muscles clutched stiffly. He sat down at his desk to think.

Redway might not go into the big game—so his thoughts ran. If Bartley pitched, the captain of the nine had decided that Murray should go behind the bat. The sophomore sighed. It was the game of the season, an afternoon of joyous riot. It meant the chance of playing before a crowd of 7,000 or 8,000 persons.

Once Kennedy had wanted to pitch against Rockton under any circumstances. He still

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wanted to pitch the big game; but now he knew that he wanted the honor to come to him without taint of any kind.

He was hopeful that his arm, in the next twenty-four hours, might lose its nagging soreness. Then he could go in and pitch as he had pitched yesterday, using his last ounce of strength, if necessary, in order to win.

What sent gloomy lines into his forehead was the thought that perhaps he might weaken suddenly—that perhaps his strength might snap and go out, and that Rockton might get to him hard before the coach could hurry Bartley out into the breach. And if the game should be lost because of the runs they had scored while he weakened——

His mind turned to Redway again—to Redway, who was known as the best preparatory school catcher in the country. Redway never boasted, but Kennedy half suspected that he knew his worth. Yet, despite his skill, the captain of the nine spoke of sending Murray behind the bat for the biggest game of the season, merely because he thought Murray, his inferior

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as a catcher, was a better judge of a freshman pitcher's delivery.

As he sat there, Kennedy seemed to hear the captain's words again:

"What difference does it make who plays? The main thing is, St. Mary's must win."

The sophomore's brain was rapidly turning out picture after picture. In imagination he saw Bartley that night when the freshman had said that he must be true to St. Mary's. The vision roused him to even more active thought.

Would he be false to St. Mary's if he went in and did his best against Rockton? Suppose he felt that his arm was in such condition that his best might not be good enough? What then? Would he be justified in going in? If St. Mary's lost——

Always the pitcher's thoughts turned to that—if St. Mary's lost.

He had seen St. Mary's fall before Rockton when the nine seemed to be at its best, and that day the tears had run unchecked down his cheeks. That was last year, when he had been a freshman. Turner, the mighty Turner, had

pitched. With two out and none on base in the ninth inning, Turner had weakened suddenly, and Rockton had dumped two harrowing runs across the plate. Those two runs won the game, and he remembered the gloom that had settled over the school. No; he did not want to see that sight again, particularly this year, when the nine was anxious to wipe out last year's bitter defeat.

That had been the only game in which Turner had weakened last season. He had weakened only once. Perhaps Turner, too, had pitched at times on his nerve.

Anyhow, the boy thought, how was he to know whether his arm would hold out? He had pitched a rattling good game yesterday. Bartley had said so; Redway had said so—— And Redway might not play in the Rockton game because he thought Murray the better catcher with Bartley pitching.

Kennedy's mind was all confused. He wanted to do what was right. But how was he to know what was right? How was he even to know whether his arm was right?

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After a time he took from his desk his father's letter. One part of it he read over and over again, until its sentences burned into his brain.

"Defeat should not sting much if you have made an honest fight. I know that you have done that."

"No; I have not made an honest fight." The boy spoke it regretfully.

For a long time he stared in silence at the flags of blue and gold. His thoughts turned back to the battles of the crew, the eleven, and the track team, and gradually a feeling of reverence for the colors came over him. He felt a sense of pride in the loyalty of such fellows as Redway and Bartley.

Well, he too would be loyal. It was not yet too late.

He felt a peace that he had not known for days. He knew what he was going to do, but he sat there quietly with his arms thrust out in front of him. Night came on. Now and then rollicking young footsteps scampered past his door. Finally, when the dormitory building

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had quieted down somewhat, he stood up in the darkness and went out into the hall.

The janitor had lighted the gas jets, and the wide stairs were deserted. Down stairs a group of the fellows were chanting something weird and ghostly. Kennedy remembered that they were rehearsing for the Rockton game. By this time the entire school had taken up the freshmen's battle cry. Kennedy, listening, heard the mighty, solemn chant:

"It takes a freshie to do it;
It takes poor Rockton to rue it;
The cud of defeat—they'll chew it;
It takes a freshie to do it."

"Scandalous poetry," he smiled. "Good old fellows!" His last trace of envy had vanished.

Upstairs there was laughter and the tinkle of a mandolin. Somewhere a boy broke out in the war song of St. Mary's, the song that Kennedy had last heard the day that Rockton beat the mighty Turner:

"Hail ye true and loyal sons,
Stout of heart, in danger strong——"

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Kennedy went without hesitation to Bartley's room. He found Curtis stretched out on a couch banked with college pillows, and hesitated awkwardly. Curtis did not profess any great love for Kennedy, but studying the sophomore's face, he had a feeling that the pitcher was about to right whatever wrong he had done.

"Want to see Bartley?" he asked.

"For a moment," said Kennedy.

Curtis sat up. "I'll clear out——"

"Stay where you are," said Kennedy; "what I'm going to say now the whole school will know to-morrow." He turned to the freshman. "Is your arm as good as it was a month ago?"

"Yes."

"You're sure of that?"

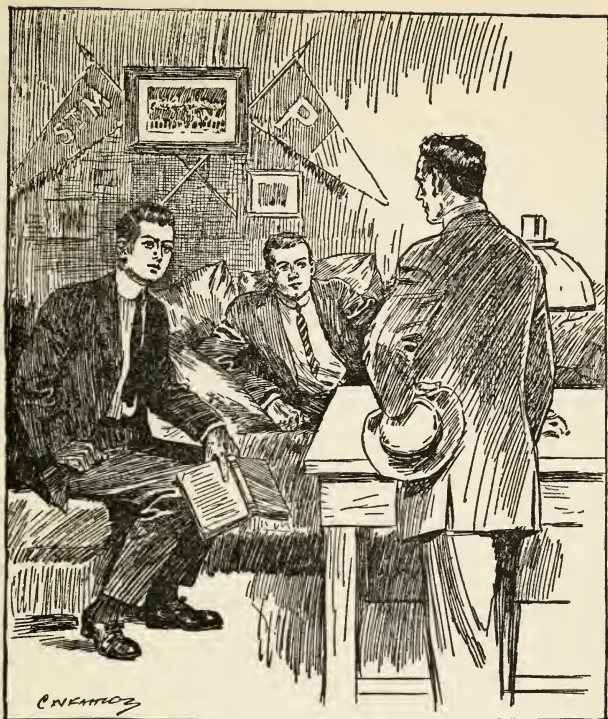
"Yes."

"Good as it was in the Marshall game?"

The freshman suspected sarcasm. "Just about as good," he said carelessly.

"Then take care of it," said the star pitcher. "You've got to be at your best next Saturday."

"Why next Saturday?" asked Bartley.



“Curtis sat up. ‘I’ll clear out——’”

“You’re going in against Rockton.”

The freshman pitcher came to his feet unsteadily. “Is this some joke——”

“If it is——” began Curtis hotly.

Kennedy held up a silencing hand. “I told you I had pitched the last game on my nerve. My arm is gone.”

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

“Did Jenkins send you?” demanded Curtis.
“I know you didn’t come——”

“I did,” said the big pitcher. “I came of my own accord. The coach doesn’t know that I’m here.”

“Why did you come, after—after——” Curtis stumbled, not daring to tell too much.

“My arm is lame,” said Kennedy. “I thought Bartley should know.”

Curtis was the first to speak. He felt that Kennedy was telling the truth.

“I’m sorry,” said the third baseman, and his voice showed that he meant it.

Bartley did not know what had brought this change over his old Warwick rival, but he, too, felt that Kennedy was sincere. He held out his hand.

“Kennedy——” he began.

The star pitcher stepped back hastily. The door opened and closed and he was gone.

Afterwards, in his own room, Kennedy sat with his face in his hands.

“I have learned something, St. Mary’s,” he whispered, “that is not taught in books.”

CHAPTER XIII

KENNEDY TELLS HIS STORY

JENKINS heard from Curtis's excited lips that night of the message Kennedy had left at Bartley's room. After that he guarded Bartley's sturdy young arm as a precious thing.

As for Kennedy, he felt at peace with all the world. He whistled cheerily as he worked over his studies, and it was the first good, hearty whistle that had come from his lips in many, many, anxious days.

When he came out on St. Mary's field again, he found that the whole nine had an inkling that his season's work was over. They crowded around him and slapped him on the back and told him what wonderful ball he had pitched in the Stevenson game.

"Why," cried Hardy, "even where I stood, out in center field, I could see the break, it was that sharp."

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“And that slow ball,” said Curtis. “Why, I stood at third and saw them swinging before it got to them. There was one fellow—I’ll bet he’d have had time to swing again, he went after it so far ahead of the time it reached the plate.”

Kennedy felt that Curtis was trying to make amends for what he had said in Bartley’s room. The pitcher slapped the third baseman across the back, with his left hand.

“Nothing the matter with that arm,” grinned Curtis, pretending to wince with the pain.

Not once while in Kennedy’s hearing did any of the nine refer to the coming Rockton struggle. The sophomore was touched. Good old fellows! Good old St. Mary’s!

When the nine went on the field for practice, the coach carried the star pitcher off to one side.

“Let’s see that arm,” he ordered. “Careful, there.”

Kennedy thrust it out. The coach again rolled back the sleeve and exposed the flesh.

KENNEDY TELLS HIS STORY

When he fingered the muscles the boy winced a bit.

“Hurts you, eh?”

“Not so much as yesterday,” said the boy.

There was some hope in that, for Jenkins was a man who kept on fighting while there was even the slimmest of chances. He now nursed one secret fear. Bartley was a freshman—a good pitcher, but a freshman. He was unseasoned. The crowds and the uproar and the importance of the Rockton game might steal his nerve, take the break out of that deadly in-drop and make him a mark for the enemy’s batters.

As a result, Jenkins carefully massaged Kennedy’s arm. While hoping that nothing would happen to Bartley, at the same time he hoped that the sophomore’s arm would strengthen in case the inexperienced freshman was hit too hard.

“Go out and get some work,” Jenkins ordered, after the massage.

“How much?” asked Kennedy.

“Very little. Just lob the ball to Murray. As soon as you feel the least bit tired, stop.”

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Kennedy threw a few straight balls to Murray, and quit for the day. He longed to try his slow ball, to see if it would work, but the coach had told him merely to throw the ball up. He did as he was told.

He had already written to his father, telling the whole story of what had happened between him and Bartley. He waited for the reply, not without some fear.

A letter reached him the morning before the Rockton game. It was short and to the point:

"I am glad that your manhood has asserted itself. We are all apt to do wrong; it takes moral courage to make upright amends. I am pleased to see that you are not lacking in that courage.

"I will be down to see St. Mary's defeat Rockton, and we can then talk things over fully.

"I do not want to dictate to you, but reading between the lines of your letter I cannot help but think that you have brought much worry to the coach. Don't you think that you should make a clean breast of it to him?"

That letter threw the boy into a panic. It was one thing to go to Bartley; it was entirely

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another thing to go to Jenkins and tell him what he had done. Once he had seen the coach when his anger had been aroused. It had not been a pleasant sight.

But the harmless little question that closed his father's letter stuck in the boy's mind. He felt that it was only just that the coach should know. Yet he tried desperately to argue himself into the belief that there was no reason why the coach need be told. Wasn't Bartley slated to pitch the Rockton game? Wasn't he now playing fair?

And then Kennedy heard college gossip that he had not heard before. In some way a story had gone around among the students that Jenkins and Bartley had had a scene in Redway's room. If the coach and the freshman had faced each other, Kennedy thought he knew what had brought them together.

He was on St. Mary's field when he heard the rumors. He waited patiently until he got a chance to speak to the freshman pitcher alone.

"Did you and the coach have it out in Redway's room?" he asked.

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Bartley nodded.

“What did you tell him?”

“Nothing.”

“What did he say to you?”

“Told me my arm wasn’t lame, and that I was a quitter, and that St. Mary’s had no use for a boy with a yellow streak. I told you once before he didn’t believe my arm was lame.”

“But you didn’t tell me there had been a row?”

“I didn’t see anything to be gained by telling you—then.”

The sophomore dug into the springy turf with the toe of his spiked shoe.

“Has he spoken to you about it since?” he asked at last.

“No,” said Bartley. “I guess he still thinks I was trying to quit.”

There was now a reason why Kennedy should go to the coach. The big pitcher recognized that fact readily. While the nine was working in the field he fought out his battle alone on the bench.

At last he decided that he would have to



“‘I guess he still thinks I was trying to quit.’”

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clear Bartley of any desire to quit. He told himself he'd go to the coach after the Rockton game had been played. Then he saw the cowardice of such a plan.

"I'll take my medicine," he said huskily. "He'll dismiss me from the nine. He'll give me no chance whatever to make good next year."

After that, whenever Jenkins, directing the plays from beyond third base, looked toward the bench, he found Kennedy's eyes full on him. The coach shivered. He feared the sophomore was planning a few new developments, and the coach wanted no new turns to the situation on the eve of the big game.

"See him watching this way," the coach said to Curtis.

The third baseman nodded. "Something's on his mind."

"If he tries any more of his funny work," Jenkins flared up, "I'll wring his precious young neck. He's given me enough worry to last a few months."

Old graduates and young graduates, both of

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

Rockton and of St. Mary's, were flocking into the little college town, but four persons were blind and deaf to it all. These four persons had weightier things on their minds than crowds and uproar. They were Kennedy, Redway, Murray and Jenkins.

After the day's work, the last practice work that would be done that season, Jenkins and Murray went with Redway to the latter's room. There, through the late afternoon hours, the coach and the captain planned the next day's battle. Murray was scheduled to catch Bartley, and for his benefit, the coach, reading from a mass of memoranda he had collected, outlined the strength and the weakness of every Rockton batter.

The coach did not hear a knock at the door. Looking up, as a black shadow moved across the wall, the coach saw Kennedy standing in the room. The pitcher had closed the door at his back.

"Well?" asked Jenkins.

"I have something important to tell you," said the big pitcher.

KENNEDY TELLS HIS STORY

“I’m busy now, Kennedy. To-morrow morning, or to-morrow after——”

“I’ll wait.”

The coach, suddenly remembering how Kennedy had stared at him that afternoon, felt a chill run up and down his back. He laid down his papers.

“If it’s as important as all that, let’s have it. What is it all about?”

“About Bartley—and me.”

Jenkins, under pretense of arranging his papers, motioned with his head. Without a word, Redway and Murray quietly left the room.

“And what about Bartley?” demanded the coach.

“He’s not a quitter.”

Jenkins had not heard that the campus and the dormitories were gossiping. For an instant the answer staggered him.

“Who said he was a quitter?” he asked sharply.

“You did.”

“When?”

“The night you called him to this room and

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

asked him about his lame arm. He isn't a quitter."

So the college had the right story. The coach ceased to quibble.

"How do you know he isn't a quitter?"

"Because I was responsible for what he did," said Kennedy.

The coach leaned forward eagerly. At last he would get to the bottom of the mystery surrounding Bartley.

"Go on, Kennedy."

"It's a long story," said the boy. "It started at Warwick High School. I was the star pitcher for one year, and then Bartley entered the school. That year he pitched most of the big games. I thought the coach was giving him the best of it——"

"He wasn't," said Jenkins. "You need not go into details on that part of your story."

"But I must——"

"You needn't. I've been to Warwick. But go on."

"When were you there?"

"Right after the Sinclair game. Go on."

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Kennedy wet his lips. Had the coach suspected at that time——

“Well,” he continued feverishly, “this year I came back to St. Mary’s, thinking I’d take Turner’s place on the nine. I wanted to pitch the important games. Then I found Bartley a student in the freshman class, and thought it was going to be the High School experience over again. I learned that my father had loaned the money that was putting Bartley through college. I told Bartley that he was under an obligation to my family—that he had to give me a clear road to the big games because my father had made his education possible.”

“And then? Tell me what happened then, Kennedy.”

“He pretended he had a lame arm. He never quit, Jenkins. Go over all the games he pitched. You know how hard he was hit when you sent him in against Sinclair. He was pitching just hard enough to win. He let Sinclair score, but never allowed them to lead. He wanted you to think that he was not in his best form, so that

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you would not assign him to the big games. He never quit, Jenkins; he always played to win."

The coach's face grew grim as the story went on.

"Anything else, Kennedy?"

The boy hesitated. "Yes, sir. There is something else."

But, instead of answering, the pitcher stared at the floor and moved one foot restlessly.

"Well?" demanded Jenkins.

"In that Marshall game—you remember, I was taken out in the seventh inning?"

"Yes."

"I thought that if Bartley made good then, after my showing, he—he would be in line for the Rockton game."

"What did you do?" asked Jenkins.

"I——"

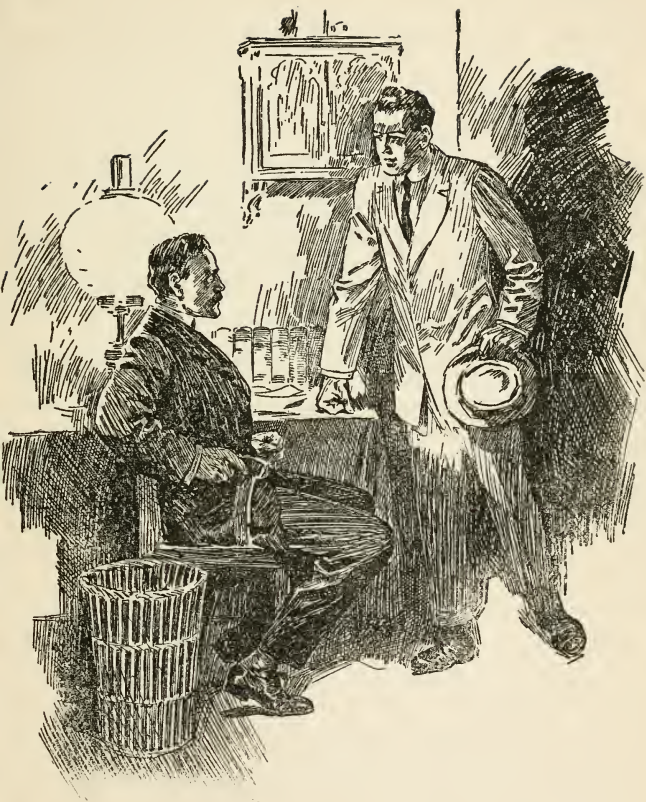
"Yes."

"I—I asked——"

"Yes, yes; go on."

"I asked him to throw the game," blurted out the boy.

The coach's face went white. In a moment



“‘I asked him to throw the game,’ blurted out the boy.’”

KENNEDY TELLS HIS STORY

he was out of his chair and his big fists were waving menacingly under the sophomore's nose.

"And you call yourself a St. Mary's man?" he almost shrieked.

"I do now," said the boy stoutly.

Later, as he made his way to his room, Kennedy suddenly remembered that the coach had not dismissed him from the nine.

CHAPTER XIV

JENKINS RELENTS

THOUSANDS of college graduates and students in the streets. Shop windows brightly aglow with life and college colors. The blue and gold of St. Mary's and the red and black of Rockton flaunting defiantly everywhere. College cheers boomed and barked and rasped and screeched in outrageous, discordant melody. Classes of singing young grads and of squeaking old grads lining up and parading without music and without rhythm—but nevertheless parading. That was St. Mary's the night before the Rockton game.

The Rockton nine, accompanied by its coach and a big delegation of confident students, came in on an early train. They went to the only hotel the college town boasted. There, late in the afternoon, the St. Mary's students came on the march and cheered royally for Rockton.

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The Rockton boys, no less true sportsmen, lined up on the porch of the hotel and cheered St. Mary's. Those boys who couldn't fit on the porch stuck their heads out of windows and did a little cheering of their own.

When the graduates began to pile off the trains, Jenkins, his nerves on edge, grouped his players around him and kept them there. They went out into the streets and feasted on the mad, joyful uproar, but they went only where the cautious Jenkins went.

The coach was taking no chances of having his boys wander about and unthinkingly stay up too late. He wanted his players fresh and on edge in the morning. He knew the value of a good night's sleep—just as the Rockton coach knew it, and brought his charges on in the early afternoon, to let them sleep late the next morning, if necessary, on the scene of battle. So before 10 o'clock that night, while the streets were still ringing with noise, Jenkins had his boys back in Winslow Hall.

“And lose no time getting to bed,” he ordered. “If I see a head poked out of a window,

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the owner of that head decorates the bench tomorrow."

While the nine was out in the streets, prior to the return to the dormitory building, Kennedy was the happiest of the St. Mary's boys. The big pitcher had relieved his mind of a wearisome load. There was now no venom in his heart because Bartley was down to pitch the season's big game against mighty Rockton on the morrow.

While the nine stood grouped on the campus, before going indoors, Kennedy found himself standing next to Bartley. The freshman's face was sober, as though he fully realized the work that was his to do next day.

"It's good to be alive," breathed Kennedy. In the next breath he asked: "Is your arm all right?"

"Yes," said Bartley.

The sophomore felt the brevity of the answer. He was silent a while.

"You're not angry, are you, Bartley?" he asked at last. "I've tried to undo all the harm I did. I saw the coach——"

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"Jenkins told me," said the freshman. "It was fine of you, Kennedy."

"It was a mighty hard job," sighed Kennedy. "I guess Jenkins will have no use for me after this."

Bartley made no reply.

"You don't seem anxious to talk to me," complained Kennedy. "I've tried to straighten every——"

"Have you acted as though you wanted to be friends?" demanded Bartley. "You would not shake hands with me the night you told me I'd pitch the Rockton game. Does that look like friendship?"

"If I'd stayed there," said Kennedy, "I'd have broken down. I'd have been a fine sight crying, wouldn't I?"

"Oh! I didn't know, Kennedy."

Bartley held out his hand. The sophomore gripped it as though he was afraid it would get away from him.

"It's mighty good to be alive to-night," said the sophomore again.

Jenkins, off to one side, had watched it all.

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When the nine marched up the steps of Winslow Hall, the coach went upstairs with the boys and saw them into their rooms. There he fixed the windows to suit himself.

"Lots of fresh air to-night," he said. "I don't want you fellows to wake up with cobwebs on your brain. Nothing like good fresh air all night for a clear head in the morning."

After he had fixed the windows in Bartley's room, Jenkins hesitated in the doorway.

"Feel fit for a hard game?" he asked.

"I'm in good shape," was the reply. "I'll do my best."

"Nervous?"

"No; but I certainly am anxious."

"Forget the game," ordered the coach. "They shouldn't be any harder to beat than Marshall; their record for the season isn't so good. Get a good night's rest. Keep that arm under the bed covers, too. I know it's warm now, but it may turn cool before morning."

Curtis and Bartley, obedient to Jenkins's instructions, went straight to bed. Curtis, on the eve of his first Rockton game, was nervous.

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He tossed restlessly. Half an hour after climbing into bed, he was still awake.

“Dick!” he called softly.

Bartley’s heavy, regular breathing was his only answer.

Curtis threw off the bed covers, and stepped across the room to the other bed. He bent over and stared at Bartley. Then he very softly went back to his own pillow.

“Asleep!” he breathed; “and he’s going in to pitch. That’s what I call nerve. Well, if he can drop right off, I don’t see why I should stay awake. I’m only the third baseman.”

Next morning Rockton kept quietly to its hotel, and Jenkins saw that his young charges did not leave Winslow Hall. He planned with the care of a coach trained by experience—he did not want his boys to go out and get the excitement of the crowd into their blood. Not once during the morning hours did he talk baseball, nor would he allow the nine to discuss the game.

Redway had gone through one stiff season and had played the year before against Rock-

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ton. He was a veteran. As he was not going behind the bat to-day, he circulated during the morning among the Rockton students, just as the Rockton boys were scattered among the St. Mary's students.

Towards noon he appeared at Winslow Hall again and called Jenkins aside.

"Todd's out of the Rockton line-up with a lame shoulder," he said. "Heard it just a few moments ago. Quinn will play first in his place."

"Who's Quinn?"

"I don't know," said Redway. "He's a new man, I guess. I never heard of him before."

"I'll look him up," said the coach. "Take charge of this bunch of young hopefuls."

In an hour Jenkins was back.

"All right," he announced. "He's weak on drop balls. Bartley's in-drop should hold him safe right through the game. Tell Murray."

That is how carefully an up-to-date coach directs college baseball.

Kennedy, also a veteran of the season before, sniffed the scent of battle and felt every nerve

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tingle. Though he was not to pitch, he had continued to take care of his arm. The pain had practically left it. Next year—well, the coach might forgive him before next year's 'Varsity was formed.

Shortly after two o'clock the coach gave the word that started his eager young athletes for the ball field. Though the coach had not spoken to him all morning, the sophomore joyously crossed the big campus with the nine as it made for St. Mary's field.

The boys found the quiet streets of the little town almost deserted. The great crowd, after exhausting the joy of tramping in cheering squads, had long before this crowded into grand stands and bleachers.

In the dressing room of the gym the boys chatted light-heartedly as they climbed into their uniforms. Only by nervous laughter and a passing hardening of the jaws did they show signs of the strain that held them.

Through the open windows they heard the rumble of the great crowd. College songs—many of them written especially for this game

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—carried to them in sweeping, measured chorus. Cheers, following the songs, rattled and boomed and rattled again. Sometimes they heard the battle cry of St. Mary's, sometimes the pealing shout of Rockton, and oftentimes a wild mixture of both. One stand reflected blue and gold—that was St. Mary's. Across the level, white diamond, the red and black of Rockton rioted and swirled and quivered.

Kennedy, at one of the windows, eagerly drank in the sight. Over in a corner the coach was giving Bartley's precious arm a last gentle massage. Suddenly a wild roar burst from the stands.

"It's Rockton!" cried Kennedy. "There they go."

Every St. Mary's boy instinctively straightened. The coach felt Bartley's arm twitch.

"Steady!" he called. "They've got to go out some time. Our crowd will yell just as loudly for us. Still nervous?"

"No," said Bartley; "but still anxious."

Murray, a little pale, was incessantly pounding his fist into his big catcher's mitt.



“Finally, when the boys stood all together, the coach spoke to them.”

“If that in-drop only breaks right,” he kept muttering over and over.

While the boys finished their dressing, Jenkins, seemingly with great glee, told of the historic games in which Rockton had fallen before St. Mary's. It was a stirring tale that thrilled the nine and sent an eager sparkle into their

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eyes, and as they listened, they forgot the years when St. Mary's had been vanquished. That was the effect the coach sought.

Finally, when the boys stood all together, serious, quiet, the coach spoke to them.

"Don't forget," he said, "that you're just as good as they are. They've beaten the same nines we've beaten, but we turned the trick by larger scores. We have the better record this season; we've played consistent ball. Why, out there, every player they have is scared stiff.

"Go for them right from the start. Rush them off their feet, and the game's over. Play on your toes all the time. Try for everything. Never mind whether you think you can get it or not; try for it.

"Run out every hit. Make them play fast; don't give the fielder a chance to settle himself after he gets the ball. There's always the chance of a wild throw when they have to get the ball away in a hurry. Above all, watch Murray's signals.

"Play ball until the last man is out. Remember that you're with a great college, and

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that it has a great record. You're all St. Mary's men. That's all."

As the coach told them they were all St. Mary's men, his eyes had swept the boys one by one, and had stonily passed over Kennedy's head. Moving toward the door something impelled Jenkins to look back. Kennedy was staring at his shoe tops. The coach saw the boy's cheeks twitch.

And then the coach did what he had planned not to do.

"Remember," he said, "you're all——"

The sophomore looked up. This time the coach's eyes rested on the big pitcher.

"—You're all St. Mary's men," the coach finished. As, well, the boy had come to him. He had been honest in the end.

A moment later, when the nine jogged across the outfield to the frenzied welcome that leaped to greet it from the stands, Kennedy's head was held as high as any.

CHAPTER XV

THE ROCKTON GAME

WITH every nerve in his body intensely alive, Bartley warmed up with Murray in front of the grand stand. At first, owing to the fact that he had never worked before so large a crowd, what Jenkins had feared came to pass. He became nervous and unsteady, and the ball broke erratically. Murray suddenly felt drops of dampness break out on his brow.

“Take it easy, Dick,” he called.

A figure broke out of one of the stands and charged toward the benches. The St. Mary's stands recognized that figure, and shouted a royal greeting. Bartley did not see the flying form until a hand slapped him on the back.

“How's that arm, boy?”

Bartley turned. Turner, last year's star, was standing at his elbow.

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"The arm's all right," he confessed, "but the pitcher's a little frightened."

"Same old feeling!" laughed Turner. "That's just how I felt during my first Rockton game. Then I realized that Rockton was only a nine, the same as the others, and after that my fright left. They've got only nine boys out there, and you've got just as many."

"It's the crowd——" began Bartley.

"But the crowd's not batting at the ball," cried Turner. "That's the point. Just pitch to the man at the plate a few times, and you'll forget the crowds. That's how I forgot."

Bartley breathed a sigh of relief. "Do you know, Turner, I thought it was my nerve."

"Nonsense," laughed the former star; "we all feel that way the first time we pitch the big game."

"Thanks," smiled Bartley, and bent to his work again. He did not know that Turner, suspecting he would be trembling, had come to him with a smooth story just to steady him. But Murray suspected the truth, and after a while, when Bartley's pulse had steadied, and the

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ball was dipping and breaking in puzzling curves, the catcher spoke under his breath:

“Good old Turner!”

When the nine first went out for practice, Jenkins watched his infield and his outfield for certain fidgety signs that would mean much to him. But his boys fielded steadily and surely, and showed no open anxiety. Relieved, the coach turned his attention to his batteries.

From where he sat he could not judge whether his freshman pitcher had the delivery that was to-day expected of him. When Bartley and Murray came in to the bench after the warm-up, Jenkins turned anxiously to the catcher.

“How?” he asked.

“Great,” said Murray; “never better. He was a little off at first, but Turner came over and laughed him out of it.”

“I’ll buy Turner a dinner for that,” said the coach gratefully.

“I’ll buy him two dinners,” vowed Murray, and at that the coach laughed. Then the bell rang, and the game was on.

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Rockton went to bat first, and the St. Mary's cheer swept across the field as the boys of the blue and gold crouched at their places. Back across the same field, full-throated, fearless, Rockton shrieked its defiance.

Bartley, when that first wild outburst of noise sang in his ears, felt something flutter hastily at his wrists. For a moment he studied the red and black stand to his right, and the flutter increased. When he turned his head to the stand on his left, that sea of blue and gold waved a mighty encouragement. Suddenly the flutter at his wrist passed away, to return no more during that game.

The Rockton coaches at first base and at third base barked words of scorn.

"Ah! A little freshman pitcher," shrieked first base; "does your father know you're out, little boy?"

"How presumptuous," growled third base. "Go right to him boys. Get it over with."

"Right after him, Dick," called Curtis; "right after him."

Bartley delivered the ball. The batter drew

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back and let it pass, and it plunked into Murray's glove.

"That's a boy," called the catcher.

"Strike!" called the umpire.

"Accidents will happen," warbled the coacher at first.

"He can't do it again," growled the coacher at third.

But Bartley did it again and yet again, and the first Rockton batter went back to the bench trailing his bat in the gravel. The next boy dribbled a grounder to Kaufman and was out at first unassisted, and the third boy lifted a fly to the center fielder.

The stands started to cheer for the pitcher. But the freshmen, massed by themselves, got there first. Above everything else, the stands heard a powerful, deep-throated chant:

"It takes a freshie to do it,
It takes poor Rockton to rue it,
The cud of defeat—they'll chew it,
It takes a freshie to do it."

It was new to most of those at the game. A laugh and a cheer rewarded the freshmen.

THE ROCKTON GAME

When Bartley came to the bench he sat down quietly. Kennedy helped him put his pitching arm into a sweater.

“Anxious?” asked the coach.

“Not now,” said the freshman.

The coach felt the pitcher’s arm. Under the sweater the muscles lay calm.

“That’s a boy,” he chuckled.

It was really to be the big game. The stands saw that after the first inning had passed. Both pitchers were working finely, and both nines were playing sure, steady ball. Bartley saw it, too, and the knowledge tightened the corners of his mouth. After that, each inning before he pitched, he glanced across at the stands of blue and gold. From the colors he seemed to draw inspiration.

When Rockton was in the field the freshman sat on the bench between Kennedy and Jenkins. Three boys of last year’s Rockton nine were on this year’s ’Varsity. Kennedy had studied them the season before when he was Turner’s understudy.

In the fourth inning Marran, the Rockton

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catcher, got his nine's first hit, a crashing double to center.

"You made a mistake on Marran," said Kennedy to Bartley after the inning.

"How?" asked the pitcher.

"He could stand there all day and pick them from around his chin. Keep them down around his knees."

"I thought he was weak on high balls," said Bartley. "I thought that hit was an accident."

Kennedy shook his head. "No; I studied him last year. Keep them low."

Jenkins heard, but he said nothing. The next time Marran came to the plate he struck out miserably on balls that whizzed just above his knee-caps.

In the closing half of the sixth inning, with neither side having scored, Murray, first up for St. Mary's, doubled sharply to left field. At once the blue and gold stands were on their feet, begging wildly for a run.

Bartley, selecting a bat, turned to the coach. "Sacrifice?" he asked.

Jenkins, by some strange baseball sense, felt

THE ROCKTON GAME

that now was the time to hammer boldly at Rockton's defense.

"Hit it out," he ordered. "They'll be playing for a sacrifice bunt. Keep the ball on the ground. If you connect hard enough, it will get past them like a shot while they're coming in for the bunt."

Bartley, at the plate, gripped his bat far from the handle and gave every indication of intending to bunt the ball. Anxious to head off Murray at third, the first baseman and the pitcher ran in as the ball was pitched, and the second baseman ran over to cover first on a possible throw to that corner.

Then the freshman pitcher shifted suddenly. His hands slid back along the handle of his bat, and he swung hard. Had the first baseman been playing well back, he would have gotten the ball; but, crouched as he was for the expected bunt, the sphere streaked past him before he knew where it was. Amid a wild din of St. Mary's cheers, Murray raced in with the first run of the game.

"It takes a freshie——"

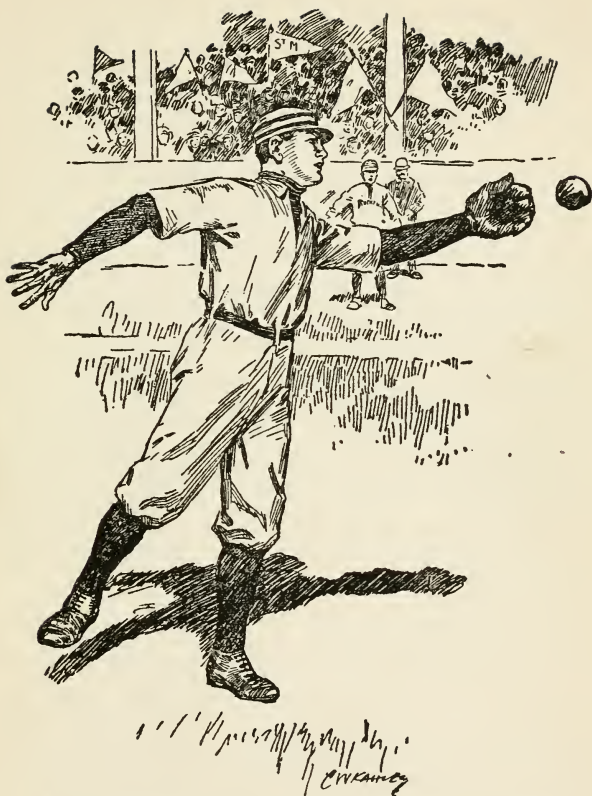
BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

That's all the St. Mary's stands heard. In an instant they were going mad with sound, and Bartley's name was on the end of every cheer. Over in the freshmen's section boys were hilariously hanging on each other's necks.

Jenkins knew instinctively that the incident had upset the Rockton infield. As a result, no attempt was made to rest on the glory of that one run, and sacrifice Bartley to second base. Instead, boy after boy went to bat with instructions to pound the ball. Bartley scored, and another boy who had singled after him also came home. A quick double play ended the inning.

When Bartley went out to pitch again he relaxed a bit. That three-run lead loomed up as big as a barn. He could now calmly take note of his surroundings, and for the first time he became thoroughly conscious of the roaring of the St. Mary's cheers. The sound sent his blood tingling in answering joy. He remembered Kennedy's words of last night. Yes; it was good to be alive.

The fielders knew that Bartley was pitching



"The freshman pitcher instinctively put up his glove."

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with less effort and trusting the game to them. They responded nobly. Kaufman made a one-hand catch of a drive, and Mellen, on second base, trapped a ball that slashed through the heart of the diamond, and got the runner with an underhand throw. Then, with the third man up, Bartley took things still easier, and put the ball right over the plate.

The freshman pitcher heard a crash, saw the ball coming, and instinctively put up his glove. The liner snapped back the ends of his fingers and hit the muscles of his pitching arm. As the ball fell, Curtis was in after it, scooped it from the grass, and threw it to first, beating the runner by a step.

Jenkins did not notice the speed with which Curtis had made his play. He had seen the ball hit Bartley's arm. The confident smile was wiped from his face.

Yet the coach said not an anxious word to Bartley between the innings. If Bartley thought he had not been hurt, what was the use of impressing on his mind the idea that perhaps he had been?

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In silence the coach watched the freshman go out to pitch the eighth inning. Little beads of sweat stood out on his forehead, as he saw Rockton slash savagely at the ball. Twice the St. Mary's infield saved Bartley, but the red and black was not to be denied. Hit after hit whined its way to the outfield, until two runs were scored. Then, with the bases filled, Marran came to bat.

"Ah!" sighed Jenkins in sudden relief.

"Keep 'em low," breathed Kennedy.

Through half-closed lids the coach watched Bartley whip the ball across the plate not much higher than the batter's knees. When Marran did hit this time he popped a little twisting foul, and Kaufman caught it just outside the foul lines.

On the bench again, Bartley bared his pitching arm. The muscles above the elbow were swelling, and a dark-blue mark showed where the line drive had struck. Neither the freshman nor the coach said a word, but both understood. It would be simply slaughter to send Bartley back again.

THE ROCKTON GAME

There was something like fear written on Jenkins's face. Last year St. Mary's, with a one-run lead, had lost out in the ninth inning. Was baseball history to repeat itself?

Taylor, the most likely of the three candidates who had failed to stand the pace of college baseball, was sitting at the far end of the bench. The coach knew that he had to take a chance, and that the chance was slim.

"Taylor," he called.

Amid the din of frantic Rockton cheers the boy did not hear. Then Jenkins felt a trembling hand on his knee.

"Please."

It was Kennedy's voice. The coach shook his head without looking around.

"Please, Jenkins. It's not because I want to pitch in the Rockton game," pleaded the sophomore; "it's because I want to see St. Mary's win. My arm isn't at its best, but it's strong enough to hold them for one inning. If it was for more than one inning, Jenkins, I wouldn't ask."

The coach suddenly remembered that Ken-

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

nedy's advice to Bartley to keep the ball around Marran's knees had probably saved the game in the last half inning.

"Go in," he said. "I'm depending on you." Then, after a silence: "Good luck, Kennedy."

Whatever Kennedy had done was now forgotten.

In some way word of Bartley's injury had spread through the stands. When the big sophomore strode out on the diamond to pitch the last inning, the freshmen suddenly forgot class pride and remembered that this was the big game. As one man, they came to their feet, and a thrill ran through Kennedy as his ears caught the chant:

"It takes a sophie to do it;
It takes poor Rockton to rue it;
The cud of defeat—they'll chew it;
It takes a sophie——"

The sophomores, grouped together in their own section, waved a riot of hats and flags. They cheered the freshmen to the echo. For the first time during the year the two rival classes were at peace.

THE ROCKTON GAME

“Come on there, Kennedy,” shrieked the stands. “Go in and hold them.”

Among the St. Mary’s rooters in one grand stand an elderly man sat straighter when he saw his son stride out to pitch the first half of that ninth inning. There was a sparkle in his eyes as he watched the pitcher shoot the ball to the waiting catcher—a new catcher, too, for Redway was now behind the bat.

The first two Rockton boys were easy outs. Then the man in the stand saw the pitcher cut loose with frenzied speed. Once, twice, three times the batter swung, and then the man came bounding to his feet and cheered and shouted and sang with the joy of victory.

The Rockton game was won.

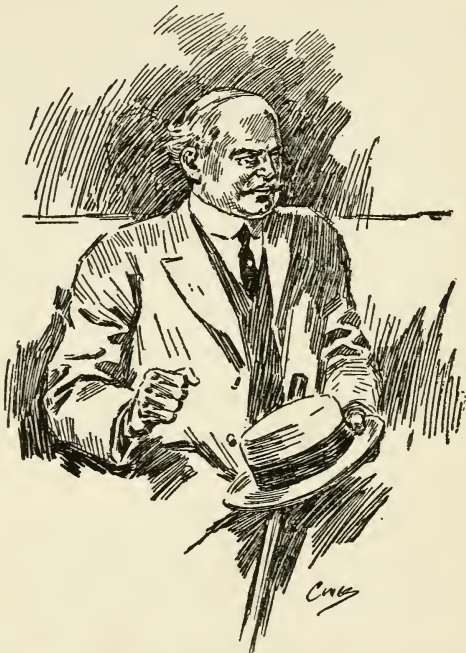
The man in the stand was still piping a cheer when almost all the others had subsided. Some one slapped him heartily between the shoulders.

“That’s the stuff,” called a good-natured voice; “we didn’t get much chance last year. Get your money’s worth.”

“My son—that last pitcher,” said the man proudly.

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

Afterwards he waited outside the gymnasium until Kennedy came out to the street. Father and son hailed each other joyously.



"The man in the stand was still piping a cheer."

"Did you tell the coach?" asked Mr. Kennedy at last.

"Yes."

"After the game?"

THE ROCKTON GAME

“No,” said the boy; “I told him last night.”

“That,” said the man, “is the best news I’ve heard in months.”

Before Mr. Kennedy took the train back to Warwick, he told his son that he had rented a cottage on Bass Lake for the summer.

“It’s a fine piece of woodland, running right down to the water,” he said. “Would you care to invite one of your friends?”

“I don’t know,” said the boy thoughtfully. “I’ll see.”

The St. Mary’s nine sat down to a merry supper that night, in the same hotel that had that very morning sheltered the Rockton players.

When Kennedy reached the dining room, he stared out and watched the students parading past in the street. A fire burned in front of the hotel. A reflection toward the heart of the town told him that another fire burned as brightly on the campus. Just now the students, and the graduates who had remained over for the fun were marching on their way to the campus. As the merry army passed, it

BARTLEY, FRESHMAN PITCHER

danced and sang and cheered huskily for the victorious nine, for by this time there were not many decent voices left in the town.

A shadow fell across the window. Looking up, Kennedy saw Bartley standing beside him.

“Going—going to quit college?” asked the sophomore, with his eyes on the fire down in the street.

“No,” said the freshman; “not now.”

“We’ve rented a cottage on Bass Lake. Would you care to come up for a month of fishing?”

“I will if my father doesn’t object. You know he hasn’t seen much of me since I came here.”

The sophomore took his eyes from the fire. “Will—will you room with me next year?”

“That would be fine,” cried Bartley. “Curtis’s younger brother enters next fall, and Curtis, of course, will room with him. I was wondering where I could find a room-mate.”

Kennedy’s eyes were now bubbling with laughter.

THE ROCKTON GAME

“Will you teach me that in-drop?” he demanded.

“Will you teach me that slow ball?” mocked Bartley.

“You bet I will,” cried Kennedy .

As the coach came into the room they shook hands, in the cementing of a friendship that was to be lasting.





